THE DISGUISE.

VOL. I.

THE

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A

DRAMATIC NOVEL.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON:

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall.

M DCC LXXI.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE unprecedented attempt I have made in the following Sheets, would require apology, were not ſo meer a trifle below criticiſm. I cannot ſuppoſe that any critic, ſeated on high in judicatorial dignity,

will condeſcend to glance his ſcrutinizing eye over my inſignificant performance. From the gentle writers, and ſtill more gentle readers of Novels, I flatter myſelf I may eaſily obtain pardon for deviating from eſtabliſhed method, when I tell them my inducement: Epiſtolizing, journalizing, and narrating, have been ſo hackney'd, that Novels grow unprofitable to the writer, and inſipid to the reader. I have for ſome time obſerved, that both were threatened with no ſmall misfortune; a neceſſity on one ſide to give up the pen for want of variety whereon to employ it;

it; and on the other, a moſt melancholy deprivation of any thing new: The imagination of my fair countrywomen is threatened with a famine; and they have reaſon to fear that their only reſource will be to re-peruſe books already peruſed: Melancholy reſource! For what is ſo tedious as a twice told tale? The moſt tender hearted female enters no deeper into the diſtreſſes of a Heroine who is no longer new to her, than ſhe does into thoſe of her dear and intimate friends; her virtue and her compaſſion equally ſupine, ſhe reads with dry eyes, and

regular

regular pulse, that the imaginary victim is in the hands of an enterprizing lover, or deceitfully conveyed into a brothel; she no longer trembles at the offended father's rage; nor does her heart beat with sympathetic joy, when past distresses are overpaid by the raptures of a tender meeting. The never-enough-to-be-feared approach of a dearth of Novels, appears to me in a very serious light on other accounts. When the imagination of my countrywomen can no longer find employment, what is left them but to realize? Unaccustomed to sit down con-

contented within the narrow circle of probability, and insipidly dream away life in a regular series of common events, they must seek those adventures in the world which ceased to be offered to them in books; nor should the enterprizing genius be discouraged by any difficulties in the task, for tho' only some can write, yet all can like a Novel. Even those who are best inclined to realize the scene, may suspend the execution in hopes of learning some adventures still more delectable than any yet invented; but when the road to instruction is shut, the hour

of

of reflection is arrived, they have nothing farther to do than to chuſe their plan, and proceed to action.

In this hour of danger, philanthropy ſuggeſted that a new mode might revive the drooping ſpirit of romance, and that when epiſtolary correſpondencies were grown dull, narratives tedious, and journals heavy, dialogue might ſupply the place. If the ſubſtitute is favourably received by the public, I hope other retailers of imagination will find the path I have ſhewn them is tolerably ſmooth and pleaſant; if it meets with a con-

contrary reception, it will not be the first time I have talked to no purpose.

D R A-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Earl of Bruton, Father to Lord Lessingham.

Sir Jeffery Edmonds.

Mr. Martin.

Mr. Edmonds.

Lord Lessingham, formerly lover to Caroline.

Sir Richard Luton, lover to Emilia.

Mr. Henbury, Tutor to Harriet.

James, Servant to Mr. Edmonds.

Servants.

WOMEN.

Lady Edmonds.

Harriet, her ſuppoſed Daughter.

Emilia, Caroline, } Daughters to Mr. Martin.

Mrs. Henbury, Governeſs to Harriet.

THE DISGUISE,

A DRAMATIC NOVEL.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Mr. HENBURY *and* HARRIET.

HENBURY.

ARE you mad, Miſs Harriet?

Har. If I am not you will make me ſo, by continually repeating that appellation.

Is it not enough that I muſt be treated as a woman by others? cannot you at leaſt indulge me in appellatives more ſuitable to my ſex?

Hen. To what purpoſe? ſhall I to gratify an idle humour, to indulge your averſion to your feminine appearance, run the hazard of diſcovering a ſecret, ſo long and ſo induſtriouſly concealed.

Har. Odious ſecret! How ridiculous a figure do I make to myſelf! I can no longer ſupport it.

Hen. You would not ſurely after all the difficulties ſhe has ſtruggled through in this affair, fruſtrate the tender care of ſo excellent a parent! You are incapable of ſuch ingratitude: ſhall Lady Edmonds, who deſerves and receives univerſal reſpect, be inſulted only by her own ſon!

Har. No, my friend, I not only reſpect, I venerate, I love my mother, and my heart is not ungrateful, while it laments the conſequences of her exceſſive tenderneſs, for to her too tender fears and not to caprice I am ſenſible this ſtrange diſguiſe is owing; but I cannot believe it was neceſſary; and think you, who had ſo great a ſhare of her good opinion and confidence, might have convinced her that her ſuſpicions were unjuſt and her fears vain.

Hen. To have done that I ought to have been firſt convinced myſelf, which I was not, nor am I ſtill. I confeſs it is ſcarcely excuſeable to conceive, but it would be abſolutely inexcuſeable unneceſſarily to declare, ſuch ſhocking opinions of any man; but your uncle's numerous vices, and depraved principles, rendered him capable of every crime; and the ſudden and uncommon manner in which all the ſons Lady

Edmonds had borne, died in early infancy, while her children of the other ſex grew up ſtrong and healthful, gave dreadful cauſe of ſuſpicion.

Har. But it was only *cauſe* for *ſuſpicion*, and therefore ſhould not be allowed too great weight.

Hen. So reaſon dictates, but maternal tenderneſs ſpeaks in ſtronger terms. Conſider the ſituation of Lady Edmonds, married contrary to her inclination to a man ſo weak of intellects, that he could ſcarcely be ranked among the rational part of the creation, (excuſe me though he be your father) whoſe ſtrongeſt ſenſation was ſomething between love, and fear of his brother, who thereby gained an unbounded influence over poor Sir Jeffery.

Har. I have indeed ſeen many inſtances of his power over my father, and have on ſeveral of thoſe occaſions felt the ſtrongeſt compaſſion for my mother.

Hen. Imagine then how great an additional diſtreſs, to one ſo diſagreeably ſituated, it muſt have been to ſee three fine boys expire before her face in ſo ſhocking a manner. To every mother it would have been terrible, but doubly affecting to her, who had no joy, no conſolation, under all the vexations ſhe endured, but from her children. There was ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that their deaths were unnatural; one cannot wonder then if the tender, the wretched, the afflicted mother, thought there was ſtrong proof of poiſon.

Har. I allow that if ſhe erred her error was blameleſs; but ſurely the moſt vici-

ous man could not have a heart so savage, as thus cruelly to afflict so amiable a woman, for so distant a prospect as my father's inheritances.

Hen. I should be sorry if at your age you could more easily believe the possibility of such atrocious wickedness; but it was her virtues that steel'd your uncle's heart to her sufferings. His abandoned mind had but too sensibly felt the effect of her charms; and though in repressing his criminal hopes, she had acted with a prudence and discretion, that the honest indignation of the virtuous resentment renders difficult to be preserved, yet it produced the most implacable hatred in him.

Har. This shocking circumstance you never told me before.

Hen.

Hen. Nor would I have done it now, as it muſt defile the mouth that utters it, but that the ſtrange impatience you have lately ſhewn, at being obliged to carry on a deceit to which perhaps you owe your life, induced me to hint at a circumſtance, that might render the neceſſity of your diſguiſe more credible.

Har. Indeed it does ſo, for there is no crime of which ſo abandoned a man might not be capable. But now that my childhood is paſſed, ſurely the whole might be made public without much danger.

Hen. One knows not to what dangers the reſentment of ſo bad a man might expoſe you, who hitherto accuſtomed to wield no more offenſive weapon than a fan, would be but ill qualified to oppoſe him. When we get into France, where you know Lady Ed-

monds deſigns in a few months to ſend you, your preſent garb ſhall be laid aſide, and the practice of more manly exerciſes will enable you better to defend yourſelf.

Har. The delay you talk of is an age to me. Muſt I be condemned for months to come to continue to wear all this female foppery, this feminine appearance?

Hen. Surely no man had ever before ſuch an averſion to womanhood. I wonder how many years it will be before you get into tolerable good humour with the Ladies.

Har. Believe me it is not averſion to the ſex that occaſions my impatience to appear what I am. If I liked them leſs, I might be leſs tired of being a woman.

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter Mrs. HENBURY.

Mrs. HENBURY.

TIRED of being a woman! What, quarrelling with your petticoats ſtill?

Har. Yes, and ſhall do ſo till I get quit of them.

Mr. Hen. I leave you in good hands, ſo adieu. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Hen. Now was I your mother, I would make you take orders, and condemn you to petticoats for life, as a proper puniſhment for your ignominious manner in which you treat ſo comfortable a part of dreſs. A pretty fellow, indeed,

you are, to fancy it ſo mighty a diſgrace to bear the appearance of a woman.

Har. Why, my dear governeſs, I did not know you were ſo very tender on the ſubject, I have always ſeen you ſo obedient a wife, that I did not ſuſpect you were ſo very tenacious of the dignity of your ſex.

Mrs. Hen. When, with a grave manly appearance, and a hoarſe voice (a little through the noſe too to give it more ſolemnity) Mr. Henbury talks of the ſuperiority of man, the humble duties of a wife, and the authority of huſbands, *(ſpeaking pompouſly and through her noſe)* I acquieſce quietly enough, and am contented to be conſidered as the weaker veſſel; but when a ſtripling, with no more beard than myſelf, a complexion much fairer, and a ſoft effeminate voice, pretends to diſpute the ſex, it puts me paſt my patience.

Har.

Har. As for the beard, Mrs. Henbury, I truſt it will come in time; the fairneſs of my complexion I muſt charge upon you, who certainly with the help of the ſun might have prevented it; and depend upon it, if I can find one baſe note in my voice, I will not ſqueak in treble when I am allowed to aſſume the man.

Mrs. Hen. Aſſume the man truly! why, child, thou canſt yet but aſſume the boy. At ninteen fancy yourſelf a man! a pretty man indeed!

Har. Have I not been thought a woman above two years, and would you caſt an imputation of forwardneſs on your ſex, in pretending that I may not now be allowed to be a man?

Mrs.

Mrs. Hen. A meer chopping minor, nothing more believe me; ſcarcely eſcaped from the diſcipline of the ferula. Some few years hence I will allow you to be impatient under your diſguiſe, but ſurely the life of a woman of your age is amuſing enough to content you.

Har. It might be ſo, were I really a woman; but what amuſement do you think I can find in having ſoft nonſenſe whiſpered in my ears by a ſet of coxcombs? It might be diverting for once at a maſquerade, but a long continuance of ſuch folly is abominably tireſome, as my vanity can find no gratification in compliments founded on ſo mortifying an error. It was but yeſterday that an impertinent puppy would kiſs my hand.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hen. I ſaw it, and you gave him ſuch a look, I was afraid you were going to knock him down. I wiſh you do not ſoon diſgrace yourſelf by ſome boiſterous robuſt action or other, for ſo delicate a form you certainly have ſome airs intolerably maſculine.

Har. I am glad to hear it with all my heart, for I began to fear that my dreſs had faſcinated my mind, as it ſeems to have done my perſon.

Mrs. Hen. You may baniſh thoſe apprehenſions, for it does not appear to have had any effects of that kind, witneſs your very warm attachment to Emilia. You frequently addreſs her with an ardor ſo very unfeminine, that I ſee the poor girl ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and from a ſecret impulſe, which ſhe cannot explain

even to herſelf, avoid you with an air of timidity, in ſpight of the tenderneſs of her friendſhip.

Har. How is it poſſible that ſo ſtrong a paſſion as I have for her, ſhould be kept every inſtant under the reſtraint my dreſs requires? I am aſtoniſhed at the command I have over myſelf, in performing my part ſo well. Is it ſtrange that an affection ſo ardent as mine ſhould now and then break forth in expreſſions a little too warm for a female friend?

Mrs. Hen. I do not pretend to ſay it is very ſtrange, but it is very imprudent. Forward boys are always troubleſome, but you above all others, from the peculiarity of your ſituation; one might reaſonably have hoped you would not have taken it into your head to have fallen in love at nineteen.

Har.

Har. Surely there is nothing very unnatural in my diſappointing your hopes in that particular; but you elderly gentlewomen ſeem to imagine we are all to live to a Neſtorian age, and need not conſider ourſelves as men till the beſt part of our youth is paſt; but, my dear governeſs, ſuch ſlow proceedings are ill ſuited to us ſhort-lived mortals.

Mrs. Hen. You will loſe no time I ſee; but if you muſt be falling in love already, I think you may at leaſt wait patiently for a proper ſeaſon to ſollicit a return.

Har. So I ſhould, perhaps, if Sir Richard Luton would wait my leiſure, and ſtart fair with me for Emilia's favor; but will you promiſe me that while I am exerciſing the patience you preſcribe, he will not deprive me of all my hopes, by marrying my miſtreſs?

Mrs.

Mrs. Hen. No really, I make no promiſes that I have not the power to fulfil; but that you muſt leave to chance.

Her. What, leave the whole happineſs of my life to the direction of chance! No, no, be aſſured I will not do that ſo tamely, I will much rather diſcover the whole myſtery; no conſequences can ariſe equally fatal to my peace. Life is not worth my conſideration without my Emily.

Mrs. Hen. Very paſſionate, and very heroic, truly; but here ſhe comes; ſo pray deſcend a little to the ſtile of decent friendſhip, and female manners.

SCENE

SCENE III.

Enter EMILIA *and* CAROLINE.

EMILIA.

WE expected to have found you on the walks, Harriet, but being disappointed could not deny ourſelves the pleaſure of ſeeking you at home.

Har. Had I known you had been there, you certainly would have found me; but as you are ſeldom abroad at this hour, I excuſed myſelf from accompanying my manima.

Em.

Em. Your anſwer is very obliging to us, but we have juſt parted with ſome company that would not be ſo well pleaſed with it. Your abſence has worſe effects than a rainy day; you cannot imagine what a rueful change it makes in the countenances of many of our beaux.

Har. I am glad of it, for any change muſt be for the better. But what is the matter with my Caroline? ſhe looks unuſually grave.

Car. I am not very well to-day.

Em. How could ſhe? can any girl be well, or well pleaſed, which is a good deal the ſame in appearance, when another woman robs her of her lover? But this is more than ſhe will tell you, ſhe ſpends ſo much breath in ſighing, ſhe has none to ſpare for converſation.

Har.

Har. You know not your own value, my Caroline, if you can think that man worth a ſigh who leaves you for another.

Car. Perhaps I once thought ſo, but you have taught me humility; you have ſo effectually mortified my vanity, that all the flattery you can beſtow will not revive it.

Har. Can you really imagine that Lord Leſſingham, by a little trifling gallantry, means to ſhew me any preference? It would prove an equal want of honour as of taſte, and I aſſure you I ſhould ſhare your concern if I believed it.

Car. His late behaviour to me has more fully proved the change in his ſentiments, than his publick addreſſes to you; but I ſee no reaſon why his love ſhould give you concern;

concern; ſurely to be the object of it is no misfortune.

Har. As to myſelf none at all, that little monoſyllable No, is ſo eaſily ſaid, that I muſt be very lazy indeed to find any great pain in pronouncing it.

Car. As eaſily as it may be ſaid, I fancy it would be out of the queſtion in this caſe. Lord Leſſingham is not a man to be refuſed; your expectations may reaſonably run very high, but I ſhould imagine every view might be gratified in a marriage with him; he certainly does not deſerve to be ſpoken of in ſo ſlighting a manner.

Har. My dear Caroline, don't be angry; I would not offend you for the world; what ſhall I do to make my peace? ſhall I marry Lord Leſſingham? if you command it, you know, it is my buſineſs to obey;

obey; no one is more desirous than myself of fulfilling the duties of friendship, of which compliance with their earnest desires is certainly one of the chief. Well then, do you insist on my having him?

Em. Indeed, Caroline, your petulance almost deserves such a punishment; did ever a girl quarrel with another for expressing a disinclination to rob her of her lover?

Car. I know not what I say. I cannot bear to hear him spoken of with contempt; and after all, of what consequence is it to me whether Harriet marries him or no? she has rendered him inconstant, he is lost to me, therefore it matters not who becomes his wife, since I have no longer any chance of being so.

Har.

Har. Deſpair is ſo painful a ſenſation, that if I were you, I would not admit it ſo very readily into my heart. Suppoſe Lord Leſſingham is guilty of a little *egarrement de cœur*; or what is ſtill more probable, ſuppoſe him actuated by more mercenary views, and that my ſuperior fortune gives ſuch luſtre to my natural charms, for I dare not but allow them great, leſt I ſhould otherwiſe be guilty of an unpardonable offence by affronting his taſte; ſuppoſe then that thus heightened, his fancy at preſent gives them the preference, may not a diſappointment in this view reſtore him to his reaſon?

Car. Perhaps it may, but I am not vain enough to think that reſtoring him to his reaſon is reſtoring him to me.

Har.

Har. If his heart were really touched with another paſſion your caſe would be deſperate, but I am perſuaded I have made no impreſſion there; he is aſſiduous, perhaps importunate, but he is not tender; he may be vain, he may be mercenary, but I do not think he is inconſtant; his heart does not correſpond with his behaviour.

Em. I wiſh for Caroline's ſake you may not be miſtaken; and I wiſh for my own, that you could produce at leaſt the ſame appearances of inconſtancy in Sir Richard.

Har. Do you indeed form that wiſh, my deareſt Emilia? or do you only from a conſciouſneſs of the ſuperiority of your charms, ſay this by way of defiance of my power?

Em.

Em. No indeed, I am moſt ſeriouſly ſincere, his addreſſes are too diſagreeable to me to give any gratification to my vanity.

Har. I wiſh then I could deliver you from them; but the only certain means is in your own hands: It is more than probable that whoever ſhould attempt to ſupplant you in his affections would be diſappointed; but I imagine a notification of your diſlike would at leaſt conſiderably abate the ardor of his purſuit; and though ſuch notification may not be very polite, it is at leaſt honeſt, and the ſooner made, the better both for him and yourſelf.

Em. Were there no impediment but my politeneſs, I aſſure you it would not hold out againſt my deſire to get rid of him, I had rather be as rude as a bear than not

procure

procure myſelf that relief; nor do I ſuppoſe I ſhould find much difficulty in diſguſting Sir Richard, were I not afraid of offending my father by ſuch a ſtep.

Har. Is it poſſible Mr. Martin can wiſh you to marry againſt your inclination? Why not try him at leaſt, and frankly tell him your objections?

Em. Can you imagine I have not done that already? But to what purpoſe has it ſerved? He will not even underſtand me, and affects to give a contrary ſenſe to every thing I ſay.

Har. But you ſhould ſpeak plainer.

Em. Have not you ſeen enough of my father to know that he never will underſtand any thing that is ſaid, but in the ſenſe moſt agreeable to himſelf? Were

you to ſpeak with all the conciſeneſs and preciſion of an oath in a court of juſtice, if it contradicted his inclination he would conſtrue it into a direct oppoſite meaning; or ſeem to do ſo.

Har. I have obſerved ſomething of this kind in him in common converſation, but I did not imagine he would extend the whim to matters of importance.

Car. You miſtook him much, he is then only more pertinaceous in his ſeeming error.

Em. Out of a thouſand, I will give you one inſtance. Three years ago he ordered me to prepare to go and live with an old aunt, who wanted nothing but the curling ſnakes round her head, to render her a perfect image of one of the furies, in every other circumſtance her perſon might vie

with

with them, and as for her mind and temper Alecto and Tisiphone were mild and gentle virgins in comparison to her.

Har. He admired her saint-like meekness, I suppose.

Em. You shall hear. Had he ordered me to expose myself to a triple discharge of cannon, I could not have been much more shocked. I intreated to be suffered to remain with him, I told him, how wretched my aunt's temper would make me; that I had rather labour for my bread through life, than live two years with her, though at the end of it I were to inherit all her wealth; but that I was certain the vexations I should suffer from her, would bring me to the grave, much sooner than age would conduct her thither. In short I wept, and begged, and tried every means of soft-

tening him, and what anſwer do you think he gave me?

Har. Told you, perhaps, that you did not know the value of money, that the purſe ought to be preferred to the mind, and that if the former was well filled, it mattered little whether the latter were at all at its eaſe, for that riches are far preferable to peace.

Em. No, that would not have ſuited his eſtabliſhed method. Emily, ſaid he, I am glad to ſee that at your age you have ſo much good ſenſe and prudence. I had no doubt of your implicit obedience, for indeed I will never ſuffer a daughter of mine to diſpute my orders. but I was not ſure you would ſee ſo plainly the propriety of the meaſure. You obſerve juſtly, that though your aunt may require ſome compliances of you, which may not be

perfectly

perfectly agreeable in themſelves, yet they will be rendered ſo, by reflecting on the advantages that will ariſe from pleaſing her; for, as you ſay, the greatneſs of her fortune, if by your good behaviour you can ſecure it to yourſelf, will amply reward you for all the vexations you can undergo, were ſhe to live beyond the common term of mortality. Therefore the day after to-morrow, according to the promiſe I have given your aunt, you will ſet out.

Har. And you I ſuppoſe acquieſced without farther contention in the conſtruction he had put on your words?

Em. I certainly ſhould have done ſo, had I not inherited a grain or two of his *perſeverance*; without failing in due reſpect to him, I cannot call it by any other name.

Har. So then you did perſevere?

Em. I intreated him not to attribute to me an opinion ſo contradictory to what I really entertained, for that were the mines of Peru to be obtained by becoming the victim to my aunt's temper, the purchaſe would be too dear. To which he replied, with a look of ſuch compoſed and ſettled ſterneſs as made me tremble, Your ready compliance, Emilia, gives me pleaſure; it is as much a proof of your good ſenſe as of your obedience; for were my children to pretend to contradict my will, I could never forgive it; and ſhe who could heſitate in following my orders, ſhould not ſtay an hour longer in my houſe, nor ever be looked upon by me as my daughter; but thank heaven! I have no ſuch trials, my children are all good and dutiful.

Har. I think my gentle friend ſcarcely carried her oppoſition farther.

Em. No indeed, I ſobbed out my thanks for my father's approbation of my conduct, as if it had been real, and hoped he would ever find me obedient to his will.

Har. And you went to your aunt?

Em. I did. But the good Lady having exhauſted her fund of ill humour, performed one good natured action, and that a laſting one, for ſhe died before I had been with her two months; and I ſo much abhorred the part I was made to act, that I was not ſorry ſhe left no will; for I would not have the views of ſuch people gratified, as will ſacrifice the liberty of their minds to the hope of wealth. My father had his ſhare of her fortune, which amounted to

a very comfortable ſum; and at the ſame time ſaw that he had not gained one ſhilling by conſigning me over to ſlavery. An uſeful leſſon.

Har. By which, however, he does not ſeem to have profited much, ſince from the ſame kind of motive he inſiſts on your marrying a man you diſlike.

Car. It is much pleaſanter to give than to receive inſtruction, and the ſuperior, in whatever connexion, generally makes the diverſion according to his own taſte, and in that point alone chuſes rather to be the giver than the receiver. But in my father's defence, I muſt ſay that my ſiſter gives a very unſupported negative to his commands of accepting Sir Richard Luton; ſhe makes few objections to the man, but only ſays ſhe neither likes him, nor the ſtate of matrimony.

Em.

Em. I know not what you may think, Caroline, but I proteſt I cannot imagine two ſtronger objections, when united. If I liked the ſtate, in favor of it I might bring myſelf to endure the man; or if he had much intereſt in my heart, I ſuppoſe he would find no great difficulty in conquering a tolerable degree of repugnance to marriage; but when neither is the caſe, both promiſe to continue in full force.

Har. Is not there a ſtronger objection concealed in the inward receſſes of your heart? has no other an intereſt there? I fear ſome man more fortunate has made a deep impreſſion; and that even ſhould your father indulge you in your refuſal of Sir Richard, I ſhall ſee you in the arms of a happier ——

Mrs. Hen. You need not ſee her there, Miſs Harriet, if your prudery will take offence at it; but pray how long have you been ſo prodigious a prude as to be averſe to the thoughts of a friend's marrying? [*Aſide to Har.*] Will you never learn caution?

Har. [*Aſide to Mrs. Hen.*] I beg pardon [*aloud.*] It is not prudery, Mrs. Henbury, that makes me wiſh Emilia to continue unmarried, it is the tenderneſs of my affection for her: how little does a woman generally love her friends after ſhe has engaged in the various connexions of the marriage-ſtate? May I not naturally fear the loſs of that friendſhip, which is the deareſt thing to me in life.

Em. Believe me, Harriet, I do not think I can ever love any perſon ſo well as yourſelf.

ſelf. No heart can be more ſuſceptible of the friendly affections, but I never found it diſpoſed to what is called Love; you, and my Caroline, ſo entirely fill it, there is no room left for any other ſenſations; and perhaps the fear of being withdrawn from connexions which conſtitute my happineſs, is the principal cauſe of my diſlike to marriage.

Har. How delightful is that aſſurance! Join with me, my Caroline, in thanking your lovely ſiſter.

Car. The greateſt part of the acknowledgments I believe ought to come from you; from you, who not only have robbed me of a lover, but I ſuſpect have pilfered from me a conſiderable ſhare of my ſiſter's affections.

Em.

Em. No, my Caroline, my heart can answer the demands of both. The only thing in which I am rich is in affection; my heart is an abſolute mine of tenderneſs, and never having had thoſe prodigious draughts made upon it, which you love-ſick girls are obliged to ſupply, I have more to give than an hundred of your exhauſted hearts can repay.

Car. That I confeſs is true enough. But ſince you have ſuch abundance, why not beſtow a little of your ſtore on poor Sir Richard, and that would make the whole affair eaſy.

Em. One would imagine you think it as eaſy to give what is in one's heart, as what is in one's purſe; but though each may contain a treaſure, if my heart bears any

any reſemblance to a purſe, it is to one of thoſe that are made by way of puzzle; ſome art is neceſſary to open it, and Sir Richard has not yet found out the way; I even ſuſpect that for him it is the impenetrable ſecret.

Car. Perhaps marriage is the way. A heart ſo ſenſible as yours would ſcarcely refuſe ſome ſhare of affection, to one whom it was your duty to love.

Em. The experiment is dangerous, and to ſay the truth not very promiſing. Reſtore the manners of the world to what they were an hundred years ago, and I ſhould be leſs afraid to venture. I can ſuppoſe that marriage might then be a ſtate of the greateſt happineſs, but folly and diſſipation have now rendered it far otherwiſe. Domeſtic life is nowhere to be found. The huſband indulges his vices, the wife

ſeeks

ſeeks the gratification of her vanity; if he allows her a handſome pin-money, and ſhe does not give the world occaſion to ſtigmatize him with an appellation that men above all others abhor, they both, in their own opinion and that of others, perform all the duties of matrimony; though he ſees his wife ſeldomer than his race-horſe, and ſhe takes leſs care to oblige him, or regulate her family than to collect a croud of acqaintance, and form the parties for each card-table.

Mrs. Hen. A melancholy truth, Miſs Emelia; but is it poſſible that a young woman like you, born in ſo gay an age, and with beauty to entitle you to more than a common ſhare of faſhionable pleaſures, can wiſh to ſet us a century back in our manners; and rather become what would now be called a domeſtic drudge, than the object

object of general admiration and court-ſhip?

Em. Upon my word, Mrs. Henbury, I think coquetry a greater drudgery than any domeſtic employment; and ſhould find a couple of hours much more agreeably ſpent in regulating my family, than in ſitting under the hands of the friſeur.

Mrs. Hen. Oh! that is only a neceſſary prelude; a diſagreeable one indeed, but the conſequences would reconcile you to it; what could you find in domeſtic life to equal the pleaſure of being admired by every beholder?

Em. The pleaſure of being beloved by every dependant; a return I might hope to receive from my endeavours to make them happy.

Mrs.

Mrs. Hen. Is there no gratification think you in the conſciouſneſs of being the ornament of every place where you appear?

Em. None in compariſon to what would ariſe from a conſciouſneſs that I had reſcued the orphan from diſtreſs, and made the widow's heart ſing for joy.

Mrs. Hen. But think how many hearts your beauty may enſlave?

Em. No, I had rather think my virtues had captivated my huſband's.

Mrs. Hen. Well, you have ſo much the better ſide of the argument, that I find I muſt give up the point; but I would not adviſe you to avow ſentiments ſo unfaſhionably right before many of your own ſex, you would become more odious to them than all their maiden aunts; the

other

other perhaps would only ſigh to think ſo few women are like you; for many of them would not be ſorry if their wives would regulate their own conduct by ancient manners, while they themſelves lived up to modern cuſtoms.

Em. I ſhall not try how far they would approve my opinions; for I aſſure you, had there been a man in the room, I ſhould not have ſpoken them, as I might have been ſuſpected of a deſign to recommend myſelf; which would not have ſuited my pride.

Car. Though there was no doubt a better chance for a woman's being happy in marriage an hundred years ago than there is now, yet you muſt allow that the condition of a woman, who is now linked to an unworthy mate, is not ſo forlorn and deplorable as it was then.

Em.

Em. Really that is more than I can allow. I grant ſhe will probably not afflict herſelf ſo much as ſhe then would have done; but it is better to be ſorrowful than criminal, which is now too likely to be the conſequence. An unhappy wife uſed to pine and grieve, but conſcious innocence ſoftens every ſpecies of diſtreſs; guilt is alone inſupportable. It is far better to weep the loſs of an huſband's affections, than to imitate his conduct, which is now too common, and is indeed the natural conſequence of the reigning diſſipation, and faſhionable morals.

Har. Oh! Emilia! how happy will be the lot of that man, who ſhall receive the hand that conſigns to him the ſole poſſeſſion of ſo valuable an heart!

Mrs. Hen. (So;---now for ſome paſſionate inconſiſtency.) The boy will make me mad; he will never be able to keep his own ſecret much longer. [*Aſide.*] Is it not time for you to drink your water, Miſs Caroline?

Car. I believe it is.

Har. We will attend you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter Lady EDMONDS *and Mr.* HENBURY.

Lady EDMONDS.

YOU are so accustomed to be the repository of all my vexations, that you will not be surprized when I tell you that a new distress occasioned my desiring you to follow me out of Sir Jeffery's room.

Mr. Hen. I could not be surprized at your Ladyship's communicating to me any uneasiness you are under, unless I had forgot the confidence with which you have

for

for ſo many years honoured me; but I have reaſon to be ſurprized any more vexations ſhould befal a perſon who has already had ſo uncommon a ſhare, that one might reaſonably hope no new one ſhould be added.

Lady. Ed. Oh! Mr. Henbury, how painful is deceit! however juſtifiable the motive? How wretched muſt thoſe people be whoſe lives paſs in a ſeries of falſhood and hypocriſy, ſince one deceitful action can thus imbitter all my hours!

Mr. Hen. You treat yourſelf too ſeverely, Madam, in calling that deceit which was only a tender and prudent caution.

Lady Ed. It is true, my motive, I truſt, was not blameable; and the conſequences are ſo dear to me, that I cannot wiſh it undone; yet I have thoroughly experienced,

ced, that no deceit is innocent, ſince it draws ſo many after it.

Mr. Hen. I hope I have a juſt regard to truth, but I think we ſhould carry the point too far, were we to ſacrifice a child to our ſcruples of concealing it from the hands of the aſſaſſin. If the evil you had to fear were not ſo great as that term ſhould ſeem to imply, neither have you quite concealed your child; you have only made a ſecret of its ſex.

Lady Ed. The joy I feel in beholding the child I think I have thus preſerved, would, I fear, incline me to approve the meaſure, were it more criminal; yet the deceit in which it has engaged me, and my continual fears of a diſcovery, have made me pay dearly for that bleſſing; and who knows how ſoon the truth may be diſ-

cloſed,

cloſed, and ſtill greater misfortunes enſue than the loſs of my child in its infancy.

Mr. Hen. After heaven has ſo long ſeemed to bleſs our meaſures, why ſhould you apprehend it will at laſt deſert us?

Lady. Ed. Every fear is awakened by a letter Sir Jeffery has juſt ſhewn me from his brother, who writes him word he ſhall be here to-morrow, and bring him the offer of a ſon-in-law, who will do honour to his family; he then proceeds to tell him that he has negotiated a marriage between Harriet and Lord Leſſingham, and promiſed his approbation; in conſequence of which Lord Bruton, Lord Leſſingham's father, will accompany him here, to compleat the affair. Can you, my worthy friend, point out to me a means of getting clear of this engagement?

Mr. Hen. It is an unlucky one, I confeſs; but my pupil muſt act the part of a diſobedient daughter, and abſolutely refuſe Lord Leſſingham.

Lady Ed. But do not you ſee the dangers that attend that refuſal? I cannot ſuppoſe Mr. Edmonds ſo much a friend to a child of mine, that he would through affection endeavour to eſtabliſh her ſo greatly to her advantage, as this muſt appear; I am perſuaded, therefore, his only view is to remove her from her father, whoſe fondneſs for her, I have obſerved, gives him no little umbrage. Not contented with the ſeeming certainty of inheriting his landed eſtate, he aims likewiſe at the perſonal. He knows his arts have ſufficiently deprived me of all the influence I might reaſonably have expected over Sir Jeffery; and does not doubt being equally ſucceſsful in creating ſome diſguſt

diſguſt in him towards his daughter, if he can remove her from his ſight. Diſappointed in that hope, he will take ſuch advantage of her refuſal as will anſwer the ſame purpoſe, and I muſt prepare myſelf to ſee my child excluded from the paternal manſion.

Mr. Hen. It is true, Mr. Edmonds can turn Sir Jeffery as he pleaſes, and ſhould his views be ſuch as you imagine, your fears may be too juſt; but the real ſex of the ſuppoſed Harriet, will render this circumſtance leſs alarming, than if it were in fact a girl, who was thus to be driven from her father's roof.

Lady Ed. I allow there is ſomething in what you ſay; that a misfortune is not quite ſo great as it might be, may alleviate it in a ſmall degree, but cannot entirely conſole us. It is now, you know, above

a year that by his arts my two other daughters have been baniſhed our houſe, and all communication between them and me prohibited; it is true I have not exactly obeyed the command, but the ſhort interviews I have had with them, procured by ſtealth, have loſt their pleaſure in my fears of their being diſcovered. In their happy eſtabliſhment with worthy huſbands I find my beſt conſolation. But this, my only remaining joy, to be deprived of him; the thought is inſupportable.

Mr. Hen. With me, or with his ſiſters, he will meet with affectionate protection.

Lady Ed. With his ſiſters it cannot be. He could not long remain with them without ſome ſuſpicions ariſing of his ſex; and though I have a very good opinion both of them and their huſbands, yet I cannot conſent to their knowledge of that circum-

ſtance; a ſecret in ſo many hands would ſoon be no ſecret at all.

Mr. Hen. With me then let him be; you know that were he our own child, he could not be more tenderly beloved both by my wife and myſelf. My affection made me wiſh a leſs humble reſource for him; it is, however, a ſafe one.

Lady Ed. But cannot be ſo long. You muſt have obſerved that his perſon will ſoon betray him. I hoped to have prevented that danger by getting him ſent abroad, on a pretence of ill health, and then finding others for keeping him there; but this cannot be done without Sir Jeffery's concurrence, as he takes good care that I ſhall not be able to ſupply him with any money. It would not even be in my power to defray the expence to which he would put you in living with you at your own

houſe; and by going abroad your income would either ceaſe, or be ſo conſiderably leſſened by keeping a curate to officiate in your abſence, that it would not be a ſupport even for you and your excellent wife. Which ever way I turn my thoughts, nothing but difficulties and diſtreſſes occur.

Mr. Hen. Theſe are difficulties, indeed, againſt which I can at preſent ſee no remedy. But there is one conſolation; ſhould Mr. Edmond's diſcover the deceit, I think he dare not attempt your ſon's life, any means he could uſe againſt him, muſt at the age he now is, be too apparent.

Lady Ed. I hope ſo. I believe him too great a coward to uſe any means but the inſidious arts of the poiſoner, and that could ſcarcely be done now without imminent danger to himſelf; therefore I con-

feſs my fears of a diſcovery are chiefly on my own account, on whom it muſt bring both ſhame and ruin. I could allege no inducement for the concealment of my child's ſex, but the true one; and that would excite ſuch rage in Sir Jeffery, that I ſhould be driven out of his houſe to beggary and infamy; for the diſtreſſed are always in the wrong. To be baniſhed from my child, to be reduced to poverty, would be hard trials; but the ſlanders, the calumnies to which I ſhould be expoſed, I confeſs I could not ſupport. Shame and infamy are the only things for which I could find no conſolation.

Mr. Hen. You ſhock me to a great degree. I know not how I myſelf could bear to ſee virtue and innocence like yours incur the puniſhment of guilt; and I verily believe ſuch an event would kill my wife; but while we endeavour to find out a means

for avoiding ſuch evils, let us not terrify ourſelves too much with the poſſibility of their exiſtence, but hope there is leſs cauſe for apprehenſion than you imagine. Surely you muſt be under the peculiar protection of heaven. Though this world is but a place of trial, yet I think yours cannot be ſo ſevere.

Lady Ed. You are partial, my friend. Was I not too diſtruſtful of that protection when I engaged in deceit to ſave my child, who had a protector ſo powerful?

Mr. Hen. Beware of refining too much; exceſs of ſcrupulouſneſs is ſometimes the error of the moſt virtuous minds. Your fears were excuſeable, your motive laudable; we are not in the hands of a ſevere being who accounts our weakneſſes criminal.

Enter

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. The chaise is at the door, Madam, and my master is ready.

Lady Ed. I come directly. I must attend Sir Jeffery in his airing; do you, my good friend, consider of what I have been saying to you, and determine on what you think the best course for us to take.

Mr. Hen. I wish the last part of your Ladyship's command were as easy to execute as the first. I shall certainly reflect very seriously on the subject of our conversation, but am much afraid it will not be to so much purpose as the exigence of the case requires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

SCENE CHANGES.

Enter Lord LESSINGHAM *and Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

Sir RICHARD.

I Did not know you expected Lord Bruton here.

Lord Leſſ. Indeed I did not. When I left him he had no thoughts of ſtirring from

from Bruton-place this ſummer, except during the races at Newmarket. But he writes me word that he ſhall be here to-morrow, in order to conclude my marriage with Miſs Edmonds.

Sir Rich. What does your heart ſay to that, Leſſingham?

Lord Leſſ. Nothing very agreeable, I aſſure you. I admire and eſteem Miſs Edmonds very much; I am always well entertained in her company, but my pleaſure is very mental. I believe it is from the want of a certain inexpreſſible feminine delicacy and ſoftneſs, which are in my opinion eſſentially requiſite in a woman, that her beauty neither charms my ſenſes, nor captivates my heart. I am not ſure that my gentle Caroline is handſomer; I am ſure her underſtanding is by nature inferior, and far leſs cultivated by education; but yet

I cannot behold her with the ſame inſenſibility.

Sir Rich. Of that I have ſeen many inſtances, but of late they have ceaſed, and all your attentions are paid to Miſs Edmonds.

Lord Leſſ. But not voluntarily. In my addreſſes to Miſs Caroline, I followed the dictates of my hear; in my courtſhip of Miſs Edmonds I obey the commands of my father, and that I aſſure you with a very painful reluctance. I hoped if I could diſcover any return of my affections in my Caroline, that I might obtain my father's conſent; but while I was waiting for ſome ſymptom of that return, (for my heart would have been ill ſatisfied had I owed her hand to my rank and fortune.) I received a command from him to addreſs Miſs Edmonds.

Sir

Sir Rich. For a real lover you have, however, been uncommonly obedient.

Lord Leſſ. Not ſo very implicit as you imagine. On receiving his firſt letter I expoſtulated with him; and declaring I had no inclination to the Lady, intreated him not to inſiſt on my obedience. By the return of the poſt I received an anſwer, wherein he told me I might take my choice, either marry Miſs Edmonds, or relinquiſh all expectation of inheriting his fortune; for he ſhould no longer conſider me as his ſon, than whilſt I obeyed his commands.

Sir Rich. I never heard any thing ſo tyrannical; he might at leaſt have had patience to diſcuſs the point with you a little longer; ſo great a readineſs to threaten the diſinheriting of you, looks as if he had no real intention of that kind, only uſes it *in terorem*; for ſurely no father can think of

ſuch

ſuch a ſtep without pain, nor execute it without long provocation; eſpecially where a man's vanity muſt be ſomewhat attached to his title, however ſmall his regard to his ſon; and as he cannot deprive you of your hereditary honours, there is little danger he ſhould leave the Earl of Bruton in indigence.

Lord Leſſ. I have always conſidered it as a very fortunate circumſtance, that my inheritance of his title did not depend on his will; for could he diſpoſe of that with his eſtate, it is long ſince I ſhould have any chance for either.

Sir Rich. What can have occaſioned his great partiality to your brother James? It is certain no one elſe diſcovers any ſuperior merit in him.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. His merits with my father are chiefly negative; he has had the good fortune not to offend him.

Sir Rich. I did not know you had ever offended him.

Lord Leſſ. Faith not deſignedly; but when men in years will lead as gay lives as their ſons, their views may ſometimes claſh.

Sir Rich. What do you mean?

Lord Leſſ. You remember Kitty Coriton?

Sir Rich. Very well; nor have I forgot that you were one of the men who paid more than the whole fee-ſimple was worth, for favors that you ſhared with half the town.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. Very true, I am ſenſible ſhe was no friend to monopolies, however ſhe had her preferences, and I believe that moſt of the men who kept her were at firſt her real choice; and ſome perhaps had the good fortune to continue ſo for a month or two; whether my propriety were of ſo long duration, is not to the preſent purpoſe; but my ill-luck would have it, that while I was an open candidate for her favors, my father was privately purſuing the ſame point; and, naturally enough, the girl gave the preference to the younger man.

Sir Rich. An ugly ſort of a rivalſhip; but Lord Bruton had more reaſon to quarrel with his age, than either with the girl who choſe well, or with you, if you were ignorant of his pretenſions.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. I knew nothing of the matter, till Kitty told it me; during the courſe of our connexion, on my mentioning my father's ſtrange and unpaternal behaviour to me; from her I learnt that he had offered her a much larger income than I gave her; but ſhe told him, that to make intereſt and pleaſure go hand in hand, had been always her practice, and ſhe could not in compliance with him divide two things ſhe thought ſhould be connected. He ſoon found to whom ſhe had given the preference, and has hated me ever ſince. I have been ſilent hitherto on this ſubject, in reſpect to him; for ſuch intrigues (perhaps) are not very defenſible in a young man, but in an old one they are inexcuſeable. That which in the ſon may be wrong, is doubly ſo in the father, and, what is apt to touch us more nearly, ridiculous. I ſhould not therefore have mentioned

tioned this to you, had not diſtreſs opened my heart, and my confidence in your ſecreſy been very great.

Sir Rich. You may depend upon it. For though the ſpirit of mirth is apt to tempt one to publiſh a ridiculous affair, yet I could find no pleaſure in laughing at a thing that coſts you ſo dear. Kitty was a fine girl, but faith ſhe was not worth the loſs of your eſtate.

Lord Leſſ. Not in my opinion, I aſſure you; if I do not think a virtuous, modeſt girl worth it, as appears by my giving up Miſs Caroline; you may ſuppoſe that a thouſand of thoſe profligate wenches, however handſome, could not, in my account, balance ſuch a loſs.

Sir Rich. A thouſand is a fine number, though, upon my ſoul you have imagined a noble

a noble ſeraglio, were it not that one could not maintain them without the eſtate, I believe I ſhould think you value the dirty acres too highly. You would not have made a good muſſelman, I ſee that.

Lord Leſſ. Not I faith. Though I ſhould be glad to marry my Caroline, and I ſuppoſe muſt marry Miſs Edmonds; yet I am not ſo fond of the nooſe as to wiſh for a plurality of wives. I ſee few huſbands who do not think they have had one too many.

Sir Rich. Then you are reſolved to obey the Earl?

Lord Leſſ. I cannot avoid it. If he would come to terms, I would gladly give up two or three thouſand a year for his conſent to follow the choice of my heart. But as the whole is at his diſpoſal, he would pay no great regard to ſuch a propoſition.

Sir

Sir Rich. I ſuppoſe not. But ſince he will chuſe a wife for you, I think you are fortunate in his having fixed on ſo fine a girl as Miſs Edmonds.

Lord Leſſ. I allow it; but yet I am hurt at the thought of marrying with indifference, a woman who ſo well deſerves to be loved, and who might engage the affections of any other man; and yet I fear will never receive any thing more from me than cold eſteem. I can reſpect her as a friend, but not be fond of her as a wife.

Sir Rich. You think her too learned, I ſuppoſe.

Lord Leſſ. No. As ſhe is not oſtentatious of it, that would be the objection only of a conceited coxcomb, who is angry at the unavoidable conſciouſneſs of his own inferiority;

riority; or of a ſupercilious pedant, who is mortified at ſeeing the underſtandings of the two ſexes approach nearer each other than his pride chuſes to believe. Unwillingly ſenſible that learning is his only merit, he wiſhes to have it thought attainable by very few beſide himſelf.

Sir Rich. Well, though you ſhould rank me under the firſt denomination, for to the latter I have no pretenſion; yet I muſt confeſs I ſhould not like a learned wife.

Lord Leſſ. Why ſo? you have learning enough to have little reaſon to fear ſhe ſhould deſpiſe you.

Sir Rich. Suppoſe I have, there are other objections. I ſhould be afraid, that inſtead of ordering my dinner, my wife ſhould be feaſting with Epicurus; that, loſt in contemplation with Seneca or Socrates, ſhe

ſhould

ſhould neglect my children, and let confuſion reign throughout my family. In ſhort, I had rather my wife ſhould be an œconomiſt, than a philoſopher, and I would have her look after her family rather than tread with Plato in the empyreal ſphere.

Lord Leſſ. Meer common place. I as much wiſh my wife ſhould pay due attention to the care of her children and domeſtic duties as you can do, but I do not think learning the greateſt enemy to thoſe duties; at leaſt, if none neglected them, but from that cauſe, what domeſtic creatures would women be! Believe me, it is the love, I might almoſt call it the rage, for diſſipation, that renders them ſo little regarded.

Sir Rich. I allow that is the more common cauſe, but it may be ſo only becauſe few

few women can be learned, but moſt women may be diſſipated.

Lord Leſſ. And I queſtion whether it is not chiefly owing to their ignorance that they are ſo. It is difficult for a woman to acquire learning, but where education and inclination have concurred to give her that advantage, I reſpect it as much in her as in one of my own ſex. I am far from thinking it neceſſary for her; but a conſiderable degree of knowledge, in my opinion, is abſolutely requiſite to make her an agreeable companion, in ſo laſting a connexion as matrimony. Youth, beauty, and vivacity, are ſufficient charms in tranſient intercourſe, but they will not ſupply us with entertainment day after day, and year after year, through the tedious period of matrimony; yet their duration will fall far ſhort of the connexion. Youth and beauty depart together, and meer animal vivacity,

vivacity, or even wit, is apt to follow them, if it has had no ſolid baſis; or ſhould it continue, would become impertinent or ridiculous, when thoſe charms are fled, which had the greateſt ſhare in rendering it pleaſing. I would wiſh to find in my wife a rational entertaining companion, who ſhould not depend for her converſation on the trifling occurrences of the day; with whom my mind could find pleaſure, when time had robbed her of the means of charming my ſenſes.

Sir Rich. Really a man muſt be very nice, who cannot endure to hear his wife talk on any topic, however trifling, in the very ſmall ſhare he has of her company.

Lord Leſſ. But that ſort of life is not compatible with my views; I hope to have a great deal of my wife's company, for I wiſh her to be a domeſtic being. I am

 ſenſible

ſenſible ſhe muſt have entertainments at home, or elſe ſhe will not chuſe to ſtay there, and on that account I would have her love reading. Were it even to have the bad effect you ſuppoſe, the conſequences are leſs pernicious than thoſe which follow diſſipation; for were the neglect of her family the ſame, yet that turn would not lead her into ſuch ruinous expences; want of œconomy might be ſupported; but when it is accompanied by extravagance, what fortune can ſuffice? A woman muſt be very injudicious in the choice of her ſtudies, if ſhe is not frequently reminded by her books of the various duties of which ſhe ought to acquaint herſelf; ſhe cannot avoid thinking, and therefore muſt ſee the conſequence of neglecting them; but the hurry, the confuſion of diſſipation, leave no time for thought, they rob her equally of reflexion enough to know them, and of leiſure to practiſe them.

Sir

Sir Rich. One would imagine you think one or the other neceſſary. Our grandmothers could live without either diſſipation or learning.

Lord Leſſ. True. They ſtaid at home, becauſe they had nowhere elſe to go; but their lives, though reſpectable, and uſeful to others, were, no doubt, very frequently dull and inſipid to themſelves. But the manners of the world are changed; no woman has now that cauſe for keeping houſe; amuſements, and what are denominated pleaſures, continually offer themſelves, and invite her abroad; it is therefore not to be ſuppoſed ſhe will reſiſt their invitation, except ſhe finds ſome entertainment at leaſt nearly equivalent at home; her ſtate would otherwiſe verify the fable of Tantalus. Many of the duties of a wife are

are inſipid, ſome of them tireſome, and require being intermixed with pleaſure.

Sir Rich. If home amuſements could attach a woman to her houſe, modern education furniſhes her with many genteel ones, and ſuch as become her ſex. Muſic and drawing, for example, you will allow might be great reſources.

Lord Leſſ. To thoſe who have a true genius for them, I grant they are; but though every Miſs is required to thrum on the harpſichord, and ſcratch with a pencil, how very few are qualified by nature to make any proficiency in either, your own obſervation may ſhew you; to thoſe who can riſe to no perfection, inſtead of being a reſource, it is a torment, and as ſoon as mamma's authority ends, they lay it aſide. But ſhould their geniuſes be favourable, many are the evils which ſometimes ſpring

from a great fondneſs for muſic; and as for drawing, it has one bad effect, it yields little improvement to the mind, and I ſhould be ſorry that my wife's principal merit ſhould lie in her fingers.

Sir Rich. Well, ſince your matrimonial ſcheme is ſo very ſober, I do not know but you may judge rightly. I cannot ſay I am quite ſo domeſtic; I ſhall like very well to have my wife ſtay at home, if ſhe will not expect me to ſtay with her; but there I muſt be excuſed. To marry is a duty I owe to my family and fortune; but as meer duty is a dull ſort of a thing, I will enliven, and ſweeten it a little, by chuſing a girl I like. I will make wedlock a pleaſure, not a ſacrifice; but ſuch it would be, were I to domeſticate.

Lord Leſſ. Upon my word Emilia is not much obliged to you; you would like ſhe

ſhould

ſhould live in a manner wherein you do not chuſe to accompany her. This way of thinking would not have ſurprized me had you been married a year; but I imagined that a lover thought before marriage his wife's company would be all-ſufficient for his happineſs.

Sir Rich. Nay prithee, Leſſingham, don't pretend to accuſe me of being a cold lover, you who can forego your miſtreſs on your father's command; the man whoſe love gives eaſy way to obedience, is certainly no very impaſſioned *enamorato.*

Lord Leſſ. I allow I ſhould make no figure in romance, but a poor one indeed in a modern novel; yet do not imagine my love is weak, becauſe it has not deprived me of my prudence. I would fight for my miſtreſs as furiouſly as *Amadis de Gaul*; in ſhort, I would no any thing but ſtarve for

her, or what is ſtill worſe, ſtarve with her; for to ſee her diſtreſſed, would be the heavieſt part of my misfortunes. Either nature or cuſtom has diſqualified me for poverty. I have many faſhionable wants, and expenſive inclinations; and though the immediate pain of reſigning my miſtreſs will be more acute, I am ſenſible it will be leſs laſting than the evils of indigence.

Sir Rich. What love may have to ſay againſt this, I will not pretend to determine, but I am certain you ſpeak the dictates of reaſon. What does Miſs Caroline think of your proceedings? for a fine woman generally believes ſhe has an indiſputable title to be preferred to every other conſideration.

Lord Leſſ. Of this I can give no account; I fear ſhe will attribute my behaviour to inconſtancy, which vexes me extremely,

as I would wiſh, at leaſt, to preſerve her eſteem; but I dare not tell her the cauſe, as either vanity, reſentment, or friendſhip for Miſs Edmonds, might tempt her to diſcloſe it; and there would be too great cruelty in letting that young Lady know the indifference of the man ſhe is to marry, which in honour, and in conſcience, I am bound to conceal, if poſſible, from her.

Sir Rich. But you do not conſider the good effects that might ariſe from her knowing it; it would probably induce her to refuſe you.

Lord Leſſ. I could not expect ſhe ſhould do that without telling the reaſon, and that would ruin me as effectually as if the refuſal came from myſelf.

Sir Rich. What can have occaſiond the the prodigious intimacy between your father and Mr. Edmonds? a man who has rendered himſelf ſo infamous by his many vices, and who is ſo well known for a common ſharper, that he is every where, except at Lord Bruton's, treated with contempt.

Lord Leſſ. The connexion was firſt formed at Newmarket, and has ſince been continued at Arthur's; the man therefore is ſuch as might be expected from the places where the acquaintance was begun, and cemented.

Sir Rich. I know Lord Bruton loves play, but I thought he had too much ſenſe to engage with a man who will ſpare no arts to win, and can have nothing to loſe but what he has gained by thoſe arts; and I ſhould imagine his profits would ſcarcely

ſuffice

ſuffice to ſupply his extravagance and profligacy.

Lord Leſſ. They are certainly not upon a par, money on one ſide, and art on the other, form but an unequal kind of an engagement; however, I have been told that Mr. Edmonds has a reſource beſides the gaming-table; I have heard that he gets from his brother, Sir Jeffery, at leaſt half the baronet's income.

Sir Rich. That is hard on Lady Edmonds; a woman who is plagued with the whole fool, and enjoys but half the fortune, has ſurely made a bad bargain.

Lord Leſſ. Her ſituation is indeed a melancholy one, if her excellent conduct, and the general eſteem it has acquired her, be not ſome conſolation; and after all it is but a melancholy one; the approbation

of mankind is a good thing, if it can be obtained through any other means than misfortunes; but thoſe who buy it by great ſufferings, have, in my opinion, a dear purchaſe.

Sir Rich. Do you dine at Lord Gentle's?

Lord Leſſ. I do, and ought now to be dreſſing for it, for it grows late.

Sir Rich. I am in the ſame caſe, ſo good morrow. I ſhall meet you there.

Lord Leſſ. Adieu. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE

SCENE VI.

MR. MARTIN'S HOUSE.

Mr. MARTIN, EMILIA, CAROLINE.

Mr. MARTIN.

YOU seem ready to take wing. Where are you going, girls?

Em. To the ball, Sir; we only wait for Miss Edmonds, to conduct us to our chaperon, Lady Betty Nelson. Oh! here is my Harriet.

SCENE VII.

Enter HARRIET.

Mr. MARTIN.

YOUR servant, young Lady; my daughters began to grow impatient. Perhaps you are more at your eaſe; I ſuppoſe you are ſure of your partner.

Har. No indeed, Sir, I don't intend dancing.

Mr.

Mr. Har. True, coquetts, you have a mind to mortify your lovers; I ſuppoſe now, Miſs Edmonds, you hope to make Lord Leſſingham deſperate, and Emilia expects to ſee Sir Richard look very blank; but pray, Caroline, who do you intend to mortify?

Car. No body, I aſſure you, Sir, my intentions reach no farther than not to mortify myſelf. I am not in dancing ſpirits.

Em. [*Aſide to Caroline.*] My dear Caroline, your diſtreſſed countenance afflicts me; you are the picture of deſpair.

Mr. Mar. Upon my word, Miſs Edmonds, many girls in Caroline's place would feel ſome ill-will towards you: they would have flattered themſelves from Lord Leſſingham's aſſiduities, with the hopes of being

ing the object of his attachment; but Caroline had more ſenſe; ſhe never conſidered them but as the idle addreſſes of a young man, who at theſe places muſt always have an object for his unmeaning gallantry; and never was in ſuch high ſpirits as ſince he became your lover. Did you ever ſee any girl look ſo contented and happy.

Har. I cannot ſay I perceive any great joy in her countenance. [*Caroline weeps.*

Mr. Mar. That is ſtrange want of diſcernment in you; why ſhe is the very picture of happineſs, only look at her.

Har. Indeed, Sir, this is cruel. Miſs Caroline has reaſon to be offended with Lord Leſſingham; and I wiſh if he was determined to behave ſo little like a man of honour, that he had pleaſed to have choſen

ſen any one but me, for a pretence to make her uneaſy.

Mr. Mar. She uneaſy! I wonder, Madam, you ſhould chuſe to affront her with ſuch a ſuppoſition; and indeed to affront me; for I ſhould think myſelf diſgraced by a daughter who could be rendered uneaſy by any young trifling fellow whatever. But Caroline underſtands herſelf better; ſhe is plainly very glad that he has diſcontinued his addreſſes to her; ſhe has done nothing but dance, ſing, and laugh, ſince it happened; and you ſee is now in ſuch violent ſpirits, that ſhe chatters away enough to ſtun one, and deſigns dancing with the firſt man that aſks her, leſt ſhe ſhould be ſuſpected of ſo unpardonable a weakneſs as being uneaſy. I approve your reſolution, my child, I had conſidered the neceſſity of it, and had not you thought of it yourſelf, I intended to have laid my

commands

commands upon you for that purpose, but your own good ſenſe ſaved me that trouble; it is a great bleſſing to have prudent children; thank heaven! my daughters always chuſe of their own free motion, whatever I ſhould otherwiſe order them to do. However, Caroline, don't over-fatigue yourſelf; I think you may, without being particular, ſet down one dance before tea, and another after tea.

Car. Indeed, Sir, I am ſo ill, that I feel it will be impoſſible for me to dance to-night.

Mr. Mar. You think then it would be imprudent in you not to dance every dance; really I do not ſee that; however, in that point, do what you find moſt agreeable to yourſelf. But if you are at all tired, I can ſee no reaſon why you may not forbear one or two dances, without its being taken no-

tice

tice of; eſpecially as people will ſee by your lively manner, and happy countenance, that your heart is perfectly at eaſe. I am glad it is ſo, for I abhor a love-ſick girl; ſhe is a deteſtable animal.

Har. Upon my word, Mr. Martin, you have a new art of conſtruction; do you always take words in the contrary ſenſe from what they are ſpoken?

Mr. Mar. My daughters underſtand me, Madam, and I underſtand them, that is ſufficient; as for your art of conſtruction, I know nothing about it; you are a learned lady, but I am not a learned gentleman; therefore --- you may not find me qualified for your converſation.

Har. What a brute it is! My poor Emily deſerves a gentler father. [*Aſide.*

Mr.

Mr. Mar. Well, I will leave you to your own way; but, Emily, I ſhall look in before the evening is ſpent, for I love to ſee you and Sir Richard dancing together; you are the beſt matched couple in the room; it is pity you muſt not dance together after you are married.

Har. But, Sir, Miſs Emilia has promiſed me her company to-night, and on that account has already refuſed dancing with Sir Richard.

Mr. Mar. Very true; as you ſay, Miſs Edmonds, there is no danger that ſhe ſhould refuſe her hand for one night, to a man who will ſoon have it for life. No, I did not ſuppoſe it. Emilia is not a ſort of girl for thoſe coquetiſh, ſkittiſh tricks.

Har.

Har. Lord! Sir, you are enough to make one mad, I tell you Emilia has refuſed dancing with Sir Richard to-night; not ſuppoſing you concerned yourſelf about it; and you would not have her now deſire him to be ſo good as to aſk her again.

Mr. Mar. Right, Miſs Harriet, I ſee you underſtand the ways of lovers; if ſhe had refuſed him, as you ſay, it would have been to little purpoſe, for a ſmile, or a few civil words, would without fail make him renew the requeſt. Well, I ſhall peep in juſt to ſee you all jig about a little. [*Ex.*

Har. The provoking wretch! I declare I could beat him. Jig about, truly! he ſhall not ſee me jig about, I am ſure. The very name is enough to make one diſclaim dancing for life; I know I would forbear it for ever if I thought it would vex him.

To

To make ſuch a fool of one! to pretend to miſtake words that cannot be miſtaken! intolerable.

Em. [*laughs.*] Your petulance, my Harriet, is admirable. I never before found any entertainment in my father's ſtrange temper; but diſagreeable as the ſubject was, I have had the greateſt difficulty to preſerve my gravity; I mean while I had the chief ſhare in his thoughts, for I confeſs his treatment of my poor Caroline wounded me to the heart.

Har. I was grieved to ſee her hurt by it; for otherwiſe it really deſerved only to be laughed at. After all, I don't know that Mr. Martin is a very inconvenient father. If he finds us ſitting ſtill in one corner of the room, what harm will that do, he will obſerve the livelineſs of our motions, and I ſuppoſe be able to tell us what dances we have called up.

Em.

Em. I am afraid he will not extend his pretended error ſo far.

Har. Oh! indeed, but he will, and extend it to more important matters too. You may ſafely enough refuſe to become Sir Richard's wife, for he will underſtand it as a conſent to marry him. I ſee but one inconvenience; he will, I ſuppoſe, call you Lady Luton, but the man's name may be endured; if Mr. Martin does not inſiſt on throwing the ſtocking, the reſt of his ſuppoſitions may be borne; at the worſt, you can but deſire him to throw his own ſtocking, at his own pillow, and to imagine that it is yours, and that he is performing the ceremony in your room.

Em. My father is not ſo obſtinate in his own miſconſtructions as you may imagine. The truth of the matter is this: he is by nature

nature violently paſſionate; his underſtanding and heart are both too good (for I aſſure you he has a thouſand virtues) not to ſee that ſuch a temper is a great misfortune; and to prevent being enraged by oppoſition, he has fallen into this method of ſeeming to take it as an acquieſcence with his will; but if any perſon perſiſt obſtinately in an endeavour to make him underſtand them rightly, he loſes all command over himſelf, and breaks forth into ſuch fits of paſſion as are dreadful. I never ventured to carry matters ſo far as to be the object of it, for I think I ſhould die with terror. There are no lengths to which he might not go in thoſe hours of rage.

Har. Oh! I reverence his thouſand virtues prodigiouſly, but if I were connected with him, I would readily give up nine hundred and ninety-nine of them for a more

placid

placid temper. I think, however, there is no animal whoſe rage would be ſo dreadful to me, as marriage with a man I did not like. Yet, my Emily, cannot determine to refuſe her hand, where her father orders her to give it.

Em. I know not how the exigence of the caſe might rouſe my courage, if he had not more than my fear on his ſide; but diſobedience to a parent —— How could you excuſe that, Harriet. Suppoſe my caſe your own, ſuppoſe Sir Jeffery and Lady Edmonds ſhould command you to marry Lord Leſſingham, could you refuſe to obey them?

Har. I certainly could; and whatever they may command, I aſſure you I will never be his wife. Let us engage our words to each other, I, that I will never marry him, you, that you will never marry Sir Richard.

Em.

Em. I cannot enter into an engagement which I have not courage to fulfil, nor could juſtify myſelf for fulfilling.

Har. A parent becomes a tyrant when he requires his child to marry contrary to inclination.

Em. I feel I am formed to live under a tyranny, paſſive obedience was born with me, it is the natural bent of my temper; but, though neceſſarily a ſlave, I feel the weight of my bondage.

Har. Then break your fetters. I allow it criminal to do what a parent forbids, but there are caſes wherein it is excuſeable to reſiſt their commands, and moſt eſpecially in the article of marriage, on which the whole happineſs of our lives depends.

Em. I fear mine is not one of thoſe caſes, as I have no prepoſſeſſion in favour of any other man, and can object no other fault in Sir Richard than that he has not found the means of pleaſing me.

Car. A very material one, I think; but I believe the greateſt part of the world would term caprice, a reſiſtance ſo founded. But you forget that Lady Betty will wait for us.

Har. Why, are we going to this ball?

Em. You know it was unavoidable: after ſhe has ſo often gone to oblige us, could we refuſe accompanying her when ſhe deſired it? At leaſt one of us muſt have attended her, and better be at the ball than be ſeparated.

Har.

Har. I ſhould think ſo, were we going to a dungeon.

Em. Upon my word, Caroline, I don't believe we ſhall have ſo great a compliment made us to-night. But let us go try our fortune. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SIR JEFFERY'S HOUSE.

Enter Sir JEFFERY *and Mr.* EDMONDS.

Mr. EDMONDS.

NOTHING can be more abſurd, more ridiculous, than my niece's oppoſition to a match ſo greatly to her honour and intereſt.

Sir Jeff. Indeed, brother, as I ſay, it vexes me mightily. I ſhould like to ſee my daughter in her coach ſtuck round with coronets, and to hear her called Counteſs of Bruton, and all that.

Mr. Ed. Oh! it will do credit to the family, and as your wife has not given you a male-heir, and your name muſt therefore drop; there is great conſolation in thinking it will however ſink into a noble one.

Sir Jeff. But my Lady did give me male-heirs; only you know, brother, I could not keep them; ſo that there, to be ſure, is not her fault.

Mr. Ed. I hope not. I am always willing to ſee Lady Edmonds's actions in the beſt light; but I wiſh there was no neg-

glect in the caſe; women are ſometimes ſtrangely perverſe, and will even puniſh themſelves to mortify their huſbands. Her girls have grown up healthy enough, and boys have generally the ſtronger conſtitutions.

Sir Jeff. Why, look you, brother, if ſo be, that in caſe, I was ſure my Lady was in fault, --- I would --- get a divorce, brother, and marry ſome other woman who ſhould bring me male-heirs, and take care of them too, I can tell you that, for as I ſay ——

Mr. Ed. Divorces are not ſo eaſily obtained, Sir Jeffery. Of all the faults a woman can commit, it is by one only that ſhe gives us that advantage; ſo we muſt content ourſelves without male-heirs, and find our conſolation in enobling at leaſt one of the female branches.

Sir Jeff. Ah! but she won't be enobled you see; Harriet says as how, that she won't have Lord Lessingham; now that there knocks it all on the head.

Mr. Ed. She says she *won't!* and pray what is that to the purpose? I should be glad to know which is the most proper, that you should govern your daughter, or your daughter govern you.

Sir Jeff. Oh! as I say, to be sure it is my part to govern, I must be wiser than her, you know, I have lived longer in the world; besides, I am her father, and all that.

Mr. Ed. Well, then I suppose you intend to insist on her consenting to this marriage.

Sir Jeff. Yes, yes; I will inſiſt, to be ſure; if you think that there will do.

Mr. Ed. No doubt but it will. A father muſt be very ſilly indeed, who will ſuffer his daughter to contradict any inclination of his.

Sir Jeff. Very true; it is very ſilly indeed; but there are very ſilly fellows in the world; have not you obſerved that, brother? Poor ſilly ſouls, one pities them.

Mr. Ed. Pity them! I laugh at them.

Sir Jeff. Why, ay to be ſure, they do make a body laugh, he, he, he. Then one feels ſo glad one is not one of them.

Mr. Ed. It ſhould ſeem as if your daughter thinks you are one of them, by daring to oppoſe your will.

Sir Jeff. What, my daughter, think me a ſilly fellow! If I thought the baggage had that there impudence, but to think ſuch a thing, ſhe ſhould ſmart for it. Fancy me a ſilly fellow, truly!

Mr. Ed. It is not of much conſequence what ſhe may have thought hitherto, you will convince her of your good ſenſe, by making her marry Lord Leſſingham.

Sir Jeff. That I will. She ſhall marry him to-morrow, that's flat. As I ſay, ſhe ſhall marry him.——But ſtay, brother—let's ſee how I can make her—muſt not ſhe ſay, I will, at church? Now, if ſo be, as how, ſhe won't ſay, I will, may I ſpeak for her? will that do?

Mr. Ed. Not very well, I believe. But I can tell you how to make her ſay it her-

ſelf. Aſſure her, that you will turn her out of doors, never ſee her face again, nor give her a ſhilling, if ſhe does not obey your orders, and marry Lord Leſſingham.

Sir Jeff. But ſuppoſe ſhe ſhould refuſe for all that, I could not bear to turn my poor little Harry out of doors, ſhe is the beſt child I have.

Mr. Ed. Oh, you will loſe her but for a few days; depend upon it ſhe will ſoon be glad to ſubmit; women have a thouſand wants for money; ſhe would not find it very pleaſant to live without any. In a very ſhort time ſhe will deſire you to receive her again on any terms; and then you will not only get a dutiful daughter, but ſee that daughter a counteſs.

Sir Jeff. Well, I ſhould like to be father to a counteſs, it is almoſt as good as being a lord.

Mr. Ed. Then you are determined to turn her out of doors if she will not marry Lord Lessingham?

Sir Jeff. I will tell her so; as I say, I will threaten her.

Mr. Ed. Oh! but you must resolve to do it, for it is very possible she will put you to the trial.

Sir Jeff. Well, she shall bite on the bridle for a few days; but you are sure that will bring her to submit.

Mr. Ed. Certainly. If you do not tell my lady, that you intend it only for a trial; you must absolutely make her believe you discard your daughter for ever. Women are strangely artful and cunning, and always want to govern their husbands; Lady Edmonds

Edmonds would be very unlike other wives, if ſhe had not rather forego any pleaſure or advantage, than not to govern you; and if ſhe knew what you intend, would encourage your daughter to hold out, only for the triumph of getting the better of you.

Sir Jeff. Well, I will not let her into the ſecret, though it would not ſignify, for you cannot think me ſuch a fool as to be governed by my wife; no, no, I am a man, I am a Lord of the creation; and I take ſuch care not to be governed, that I always contradict every thing my wife ſays, and act contrary to every thing I ſee ſhe wiſhes, juſt as you bid me do. So I know how to govern, you ſee. Women are ſilly creatures, brother, ſad ſilly creatures, I know not what would become of us, if ſo be that in caſe we were to be governed by them. But my wife, I muſt do her the

juſtice to ſay, knows that I am wiſer than her, and that I am her lord and maſter, for ſhe never pretends to contradict or oppoſe me.

Mr. Ed. And hopes, through that very compliance, to govern you.

Sir Jeff. She is diſappointed in that there hope though. You have warned me well againſt that; but if ſo be you had not, my own ſenſe, and underſtanding, and all that, would have ſhewn me the danger; and the more ſhe complies, the more I contradict her; and the better humoured ſhe is, the croſſer I am; not but it often goes againſt me, till I think of your good advice.

Mr. Ed. [*Aſide.*] A ſweet huſband, truly! Of what materials can that woman be compoſed, who can uniformly act like

Lady

Lady Edmonds to ſuch a mate? But curſe her! ſhe deſerves to ſuffer. —— Well, brother, you will carefully ſtick to your point. I think therefore you cannot do better than ſend for my niece directly; and lay your commands upon her.

Sir Jeff. I will then. [*Calls.*] Jonathan, tell your Lady and Harriet to come to me. I think my wife may help us; for though, as you ſay, ſhe may love to croſs me, yet if ſo be ſhe finds, that in caſe Harriet is obſtinate, ſhe muſt loſe her, that there will make her try to bring her ſpirit down.

Mr. Ed. Poſſibly it may; and I imagine ſo noble an eſtabliſhment muſt flatter any mother's vanity.

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter Lady EDMONDS *and* HARRIET.

Sir JEFFERY.

COME hither, Harriet; come hither, child; I sent for you to tell you once for all, that I will have you marry Lord Lessingham, aye, and that in a few days—to-morrow, if I please.

Har. Dear Sir, I only beg——

Sir Jeff. No, no, no begging, do as I bid you, or you may beg indeed; tell me

at

at once, flat and plain, that you are ready to marry him, at that there time that I ſhall think proper, or you are no child of mine.

Har. Let me beſeech you, Sir ——

Sir Jeff. I will have no beſeeching, I tell you, beſeeching is as bad as begging; I will ſee you a great lady; and great ladies neither beſeech nor beg: do they, brother?

Mr. Ed. I am ſure, when my dear niece reflects ſeriouſly on the duty ſhe owes to her father, ſhe will no longer make any oppoſition to his commands. And a woman of Lady Edmonds's exemplary piety, muſt have inſtilled into her daughter's mind, too ſtrong a ſenſe of the duty of filial obedience, for it to fail on the firſt trial.

Lady Ed. I have at leaſt a very ſtrong ſenſe, Sir, of the favour you intend me by that compliment; but I muſt tell you, that, whatever endeavours I have uſed to teach my daughters the duty of filial obedience, I never taught them they were to be implicit ſlaves. Every connexion has its reciprocal duties.

Mr. Ed. By your ladyſhip's care, then, Miſs Harriet, may very well underſtand the duty of a father, however ignorant ſhe is of the duty of a daughter.

Sir Jeff. Duty of a father! what would he have me dutiful? very fine, truly! I! Sir Jeffery Edmonds, dutiful! I know better things; as I ſay, it is wives and daughters that are to be dutiful, what have I to do with duty! I am no woman.

Lady

Lady. Ed. Dear Sir Jeffery, you entirely miſtake the meaning of my words.

Sir Jeff. Oh! to be ſure! I miſtake! I am a fool, I ſuppoſe, ha, is that your meaning? You ſhall ſee, though that I have more ſenſe than all you women put together; for I tell you flat and plain, that if Harriet does not conſent to marry Lord Leſſingham, I will never ſee her face again, nor you neither, madam. Do you hear, Harriet, ſay Yes, this minute, or I turn you out of doors directly, you may go ſeek your fortune where you will; you may then go about begging and beſeeching, and ſee what you will get by it. I be dutiful, truly! you ſhall now ſee who muſt be dutiful. Why don't you ſpeak?

Har. What can I ſay, Sir?

Sir

Sir Jeff. Why, *Yes*, to be ſure, that is not ſuch a very hard word, I think.

Har. Indeed, Sir, I find it the moſt difficult word to pronounce on this occaſion, of any in the whole language.

Sir Jeff. There now, you found it ſo hard a matter to ſpeak, and there have you ſpoken twenty times as much as I deſired.

Mr. Ed. Really, niece, your oppoſition ſurprizes me; to refuſe one of the prettieſt young noblemen in England, with ſo good a fortune, is unaccountable. But as you are averſe to it; I am ſorry my brother's honour is ſo deeply engaged, that the match is unavoidable: had it not been for the tender affection I bear my brother and Lady Edmonds, and the fondneſs I have

for you, however great the eſtabliſhment, I ſhould not have concerned myſelf in it; and I am very unhappy that my good intentions ſhould occaſion any uneaſineſs in the family.

Sir Jeff. Oh! you are the beſt of brothers! ſo kind, ſo careful of me; and here are you quite a father to my child; and yet there ſhe ſtands pouting, when ſhe ought to be on her knees, thanking you for all your goodneſs. Why don't you, huſſey?

Har. I defer thoſe thanks, Sir, till I have a due ſenſe of the obligation.

Mr. Ed. Don't talk of it, I don't love to be thanked; when I ſerve a friend, I am ſufficiently rewarded by the conſciouſneſs of having conferred a benefit; I deſire

ſure no return from my dear niece, but to ſee her properly obedient to her father.

Sir Jeff. That is true; that's the beſt return; ſo Harriet, do ye hear, conſent to this match at once, or get out of my houſe.

Lady Ed. Dear Sir Jeffery, let me prevail with you to allow her a little time to determine: this affair has come upon her ſo ſuddenly, ſhe has had no leiſure to conſider it properly; reflection on the advantages it offers her, and a little longer acquaintance with Lord Leſſingham may reconcile her to it. My dear Sir Jeffery, let me prevail with you thus far.

Sir Jeff. No, you ſhall not prevail with me, you know you never do prevail with me; a wife prevail over her huſband, truely! a fine paſs indeed we ſhould come to,

if

if in caſe wives were to prevail over their huſbands! Brother, did you ever hear the like?

Mr. Ed. If my partial regard for Lady Edmonds makes me too deſirous of obliging her, brother, you muſt excuſe me; but I cannot forbear joining in her requeſt, and begging you will give my niece ſome hours to conſider of it; I dare anſwer, that a little reflexion will bring her to reaſon; allow her till the afternoon to determine.

Sir Jeff. Well, to oblige you, brother, though, as I ſay, you are too good, you batchelors don't know how women ſhould be dealt with, but to oblige you, I will give her till the afternoon to conſider of it.

Lady Ed. Till the afternoon! what can be expected from ſo ſhort a delay? I think,

Mr. Edmonds, the very partial regard you ſpeak of might have induced you to have aſked for a longer reſpite.

Mr. Ed. I would have done ſo, madam, had I not been ſure, that if I ſolicited a longer delay, my brother would have granted none at all.

Sir Jeff. You are in the right, brother, no more I ſhould; not I.

Mr. Ed. My chaiſe is at the door, Sir Jeffery, ſhall I have the pleaſure of carrying you your airing, and we will leave Lady Edmonds to bring her daughter to reaſon. I cannot doubt the ſucceſs of her ladyſhip's eloquence.

Lady Ed. [*Aſide.*] Inſulting wretch!

Sir.

Sir Jeff. With all my heart, I am ready to attend you.

Mr. Ed. [*Aside.*] Now must not I lose sight of him an instant, till this affair is decided. [*Exeunt Sir Jeff. and Mr. Ed.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. HENBURY.

Mr. HENBURY.

PARDON our impatience to know what has paſſed.

Lady Ed. Oh! my child, what will become of thee!

Har. An inſolent raſcal! if I had had a cane in my hand, I could not have forborne to exerciſe it upon him. With what bare-

faced

faced impudence he impoſes on my poor father, without even having the decency to attempt to conceal it from us! I wiſh I had had a cane.

Mrs. Hen. Pray who is it you ſo much wiſh to have favoured with it.

Her. That vile raſcal my uncle.

Mrs. Hen. Well, I think I could not have quarrelled with you for belying your petticoats on ſuch an occaſion. I could have been contented to have ſeen you acting the Thaleſtris, if you had beat him thoroughly. You would have made a graceful Amazon. And the free uſe you make of the term, raſcal, would have better ſuited your maſculine employment than your habit.

Her.

Har. A truce with your delicacies, my dear Mrs. Henbury; this is no time for frivolous attentions. My father inſiſts that I ſhall this afternoon either give my word, that I will marry Lord Leſſingham, or leave the houſe and ſeek my fortune.

Mrs. Hen. This your ladyſhip foreſaw.

Lady Ed. But of what uſe to foreſee it, except I could at the ſame time have found the means of preventing it! What will become of my child!

Mrs. Hen. Is he not our child too? Our humble roof was long honoured by his living in it, and it is ſtill more his than ever.

Har. My dear Madam, I am ſenſible of your goodneſs, but ſhould be inexcuſable in ſuffering myſelf to become a burden on you.

you. To be ſeparated from the beſt of mothers, and from you my dear foſter-parents, is my chief concern. The diſtreſs of a young woman ſo circumſtanced would indeed be dreadful; but a man need never be diſcouraged, he has the world to buſtle in, and may carve his own fortune.

Lady Ed. Oh! my dear, diſtreſs reaches every ſex. Every means of gaining a ſupport requires preparatory exerciſe and ſtudy; you are qualified for none.

Har. The army is a reſource for thoſe who are moſt deſtitute of uſeful acquirements.

Lady Ed. It would indeed be one, were it poſſible for you to obtain a commiſſion, but that you ſee cannot be done; and to be the ſlave of inſolent officers, and the companion of the moſt profligate of man-

kind; for ſixpence *per* day is inſupportable.

Har. It is indeed worſe than ſtarving. But a very different buſineſs offers itſelf. Surely I have not profited ſo little by Mr. Henbury's inſtructions, as not to be qualified for ſome of the emoluments of literature; though my perſon has been tended with feminine delicacy, yet my mind has been educated in a manner ſuitable to my ſex.

Mr. Hen. I ſhould not do you juſtice, were I not to ſay, that from your unwearied application, and uncommon quickneſs of parts, you have acquired more learning than any young gentleman of your age, I ever met with, notwithſtanding the the far greater opportunities afforded them, by the more advantageous method of their education. But learning is leſs lucrative

than

than you imagine. All who have attempted to live by it have found it ſo; an unknown author is little regarded; were you known, your youth would diſcourage bookſellers from engaging with you; but what is ſtill more important, you might be diſcovered, and in what troubles might not that involve Lady Edmonds!

Har. There indeed you have ſilenced my vanity, and my ambition. I might perhaps have flattered myſelf with hopes of better ſucceſs than you imagine, but nothing could repay me for the painful apprehenſions of increaſing the afflictions of my dear mother. For a thouſand worlds I would not involve her in new diſtreſſes. —Let me ſee — why ſhould I not enter as a volunteer in the Ruſſian ſervice, and fight againſt the Turks?

Lady Ed. For heaven's ſake do not mention ſuch a thing, the very thought is enough to kill me.

Mrs. Hen. A fine way indeed of avoiding to give pain to your tender mother. The boy's head runs on nothing but fighting. Becauſe you have not yet been a man, you now want to be a hero, I ſuppoſe. A little experience will teach you, that men are not ſo fond of expoſing themſelves to dangers.

Har. But what courſe can I follow then?

Mrs. Hen. That is not the point now to be ſettled. Let things turn out the worſt that can be, you can calmly conſider this matter over at your leiſure at our houſe. The buſineſs now is to get as well as you can off this cruel alternative. Suppoſe you

you ſhould try Lord Leſſingham's honour, tell him your averſeneſs to the match, and the threatened conſequences of your refuſal, and beg him to ſave you from ruin, by declining it.

Lady Ed. Do ſo, my dear; if he has either ſenſe or honour he will take it on himſelf.

Har. I am ready to follow your advice, but I own I have no hopes from it. I am convinced Lord Leſſingham does his own inclination violence in conſenting to the match; his motives therefore muſt be very ſtrong: if they can conquer his love for another woman, can I expect them to give way to a generous compaſſion for me?

Lady Ed. The probability indeed does not appear great, but it is our only reſource.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Lord Leſſingham, madam, is come to wait on you.

Lady Ed. Shew him up. This happens very opportunely; we will leave you, that you may at leaſt make the attempt. [*Exeunt Lady Edmonds, Mr. and Mrs. Henbury.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter Lord LESSINGHAM.

Lord LESSINGHAM.

I Hope, madam, I do not intrude unſeaſonably.

Har. No, my lord, you could not have found a time when I more wiſhed to ſee you.

Lord Leſſ. I ſhall eſteem myſelf very happy, if there is any time when you can

ſee me with pleaſure. You have hitherto given me little reaſon to flatter myſelf with a poſſibility of finding that fortunate minute; yet, ſhould it not arrive, how unhappy muſt the remainder of my life be! An union, that might beſtow on me the higheſt felicity, may, by your indifference, be rendered my greateſt misfortune.

Har. Believe me, my lord, an union with me would indeed be your greateſt misfortune, but you ſhall never incur it. Even paternal authority has not ſufficient power to make me conſent to be your wife: that you ſhall never have my hand, may well conſole you for not poſſeſſing my heart.

Lord Leſſ. Is any thing in nature an adequate conſolation for being rejected by you? I plead no juſt title to your affections, but might I not preſume to hope, that

that I ſhould not be the object of your averſion? I claim no merit, but how have I been unfortunate enough to offend you ſo very much, that a father's commands cannot obtain my forgiveneſs?

Har. My lord, the affair between us is grown ſo ſerious, and carried on with ſo much precipitation, that conciſeneſs and ſincerity are become neceſſary; if therefore I ſpeak more plainly than politeneſs will warrant, let the deſperateneſs of our ſituation plead my excuſe. You are by no means the object of my averſion; I ſhould with pleaſure cultivate your acquaintance, nay even your friendſhip. You have never offended me, becauſe I am well perſuaded you have not loved me.

Lord Leſſ. Not loved you! How little you know my heart, or your own charms, if you can doubt my love! I proteſt——

Har. No proteſting, I beſeech you; if I do not believe your aſſurances, it would only ſerve to give me a bad opinion of your veracity; and if I did believe them, I ſhould think you not only unworthy my affection, but even of the ſmalleſt regard. I am not ſufficiently acquainted with the wretched ſophiſtry of love, to ſay what it might ſuggeſt to me in your defence, were you the object of my affection; but as you cannot be ſo, I would wiſh to eſteem you, and therefore muſt deſire you to forbear the ſubject. It is a great pleaſure to me to know that I owe your addreſſes to Lord Bruton's commands; you obey your father, and not your heart; but my reſolution of not marrying you, does not proceed from this knowledge; if you loved me more than ever man loved woman, my reſolution would be the ſame; no power

on

on earth could force me to become your wife.

Lord Leſſ. What can I urge, when you have told me that my love would be an offence?

Har. Nothing, till you have heard me farther. You no doubt are not ignorant, how obſtinately my father inſiſts on my compliance; but you cannot know that he has poſitively declared, that if I do not conſent before this day is expired, to marry you, he will diſcard me for ever. Were my father left to the direction of his own actions, theſe menaces would be leſs terrible, the paternal heart might melt, but my uncle will take care to keep him ſteady to this cruel reſolution.

Lord Leſſ. Am I ſo much the object of your hatred, that you will venture to incur

cur ſuch a ſentence, rather than marry a man, who will make it the whole ſtudy of his life to render yours happy?

Har. Hatred, as I have already told you, is out of the queſtion. Believe me, I make no idle declaration, when I aſſure you, I will not, I cannot marry you. What I have more to ſay, is only this, if you have not generoſity enough to extricate me out of this difficulty, my ruin is inevitable. Diſtreſs and poverty muſt be my portion through life; deſtitute of ſupport, deprived of parental protection, thrown into a dangerous world, unfriended and diſgraced, what complicated wretchedneſs awaits me! By continuing your addreſſes, you incur a ſhare of the guilt; you are even the principal agent in my ruin.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. You diſtract me. What can I do?

Har. Refuſe to marry me. The advantages of the union are ſo much on my ſide, that Lord Bruton cannot be ſo ſtrongly intereſted in it, as my father might reaſonably be, even if he were freed from my uncle's influence; Lord Bruton may be diſpleaſed, but he cannot be highly offended; and will you not expoſe yourſelf to a tranſient fit of diſpleaſure, to ſave an innocent perſon from ruin?

Lord Leſſ. How your uncle has contrived to make my father as abſolutely bent on this alliance as yours can be, I know not; but certain it is, that my refuſal would be attended with the ſame conſequences to me. I have too much reaſon to fear that he would even be glad of an excuſe to diſinherit

herit me. Since then, my dear madam, you ſee that our ſituations are equally deſperate, why will you not conquer your reluctance, and accept me as the leaſt evil that is within your choice. I will patiently ſupport your indifference, till by affectionate aſſiduity I have conquered it; I will endeavour by every means to gain your heart; and if I cannot ſucceed, will attribute my unhappineſs to my own demerits, without reproaching you, or reſenting your unconquerable averſion.

Har. Such a conduct as your lordſhip promiſes would be extremely generous; and though it would not be ſo eaſily preſerved as you may imagine, yet in ſo dreadful an exigence, were it poſſible, I ſhould think it prudent to make the experiment, however dangerous; but, I muſt again repeat, it is impoſſible I ſhould marry you.

you. Neither averſion, nor any other thing that might be removed or controlled, is the impediment, it is ſuch as muſt ever be unconquerable; but ſecreſy is of ſo great importance to me, that I am ſure your lordſhip will excuſe my not explaining it more fully; and ſince there is no means of ſaving me from ruin, I muſt acquieſce under it, and endeavour to ſupport properly a fate that is inevitable.

Lord Leſſ. No, madam, if one of us muſt be undone, I am the proper perſon: a man has at leaſt fewer evils to ſtruggle with; and rather than you ſhould be expoſed to diſtreſſes, which the ſoftneſs of your ſex renders you ſo little able to bear, I will immediately declare an inſuperable objection to our marriage, and expoſe myſelf to thoſe effects of my father's anger, which have hitherto had, perhaps, too great influence over me. I ſhall thus ſave a

woman

woman whom I highly eſteem and regard, and puniſh myſelf for my weak attachment to fortune; but he who has ever been lulled in the lap of luxury, has certainly not been bred in the ſchool of philoſophy. This conſideration may beſt excuſe me.

Har. Stay, my lord, the nobleneſs of your mind charms me; but do not imagine I will ſuffer you to effect your purpoſe. I will not through your ruin eſcape my own. I will, as juſtice requires, take the refuſal on myſelf; and to prevent your generoſity from leading you into any danger, I ſolemnly declare to you, that no meaſures you could take ſhould prevent my declaring, that all the oppoſition is on my ſide; therefore, by any attempts you can make, you will only increaſe the evil. Had only a ſlight and tranſient inconvenience been the conſequence of your breaking off the marriage, I ſhould have gratefully accepted

the

the obligation; but as the danger is equal to both, the alternative will not admit of the leaſt heſitation.

Lord Leſſ. It grieves me extremely, madam, to think I am in any manner made the cauſe of diſtreſſing you, and the greateſt obligation you can confer on me, is, to put me in ſome way of alleviating the misfortune I have ſo unfortunate a ſhare in bringing upon you.

Har. My thanks are all the return I have in my power to make you for ſo obliging an offer; but I beg you will not conſider yourſelf as in any degree accountable for what I may ſuffer, as you are entirely guiltleſs in it; for I am perſuaded, had not paternal authority, armed with all its terrors, influenced you, Miſs Caroline Martin would have had no cauſe to charge you with inconſtancy.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. I don't deny, madam, a due ſenſe of Miſs Caroline's charms. I knew her before I had the pleaſure of ſeeing you, and ——

Har. Upon my word I did not mean to put you to the perplexity of inventing an excuſe; I never was ſo fooliſhly vain as to imagine I had a right to every man's heart; and that vanity muſt be great indeed, that diſtreſs does not ſilence; therefore you may ſafely believe, that nothing can hurt you ſo much, in my opinion, as a ſuppoſition of your being inconſtant, even in favour of myſelf; but I do you more juſtice; and hope to ſee you expiate the reaſonable offence your late neglect muſt have given her, by the moſt affectionate aſſiduities.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. My father's preſence, madam, does not allow me liberty to obey your commands. He will enquire the reſult of my viſit to you; what ſhall I tell him?

Har. The truth; that I am determined never — but who is here?

SCENE

SCENE V.

Enter Lord BRUTON *and Mr.* EDMONDS.

Mr. EDMONDS.

I Am afraid, my lord, we are impertinent intruders; lovers do not eaſily forgive an interruption. Miſs Harriet, Lord Bruton, (introducing him) I need not perform the counter-part of the ceremonial to your lordſhip.

Lord

Lord Bru. It is abſolutely unneceſſary, Sir, the young lady's beauty leaves me no room to doubt its being Miſs Edmonds. My ſon, madam, is certainly the happieſt fellow in the univerſe; I ſhould think myſelf fortunate in the approaching connexion, if I did not envy the dog the more delightful relation which he will bear to you.

Mr. Ed. Still gallant, my lord.

Lord Bru. Who the devil can be otherwiſe in the preſence of ſo fine a woman? Upon my ſoul ſhe might awaken paſſions buried in the grave of fourſcore. I aſſure you, fair lady, if I could flatter myſelf that the younger man has not a better chance for your favour, I ſhould become my ſon's rival.

Har. Were my ſpirits as gay as your lordſhip's, I ſhould be better able to anſwer you, but really you are too young for me.

Lord Bru. That is a compliment for which I muſt thank you on this fair hand. Nay, I poſitively will kiſs it; you are the ſovereign of my ſoul, and I muſt ſwear allegiance on it. I would take any oath you could exact, if I might ſeal it on this book, (kiſſes her hand, whilſt ſhe ſtruggles to withdraw it.)

Har. Forbear, my lord, I meant you no compliment; and if I had, I would not be thus thanked.

Mr. Ed. Fye! child, why ſo prudiſh to your father-in-law?

Har.

Har. Let him ſtay till he is ſo, Sir. I don't underſtand ſuch liberties.

Lord Bru. Don't chide her, Edmonds; anger heightens her charms. Happy, Leſſingham! to have a wife who is rendered irreſiſtibly lovely, by the very circumſtance which deſtroys the beauty of every other woman; her ſmiles allure, her frowns ſubdue.

Har. I wiſh they could ſubdue impertinence, I could find good uſe for them.

Lord Bru. I make no doubt but you find ſufficient opportunities to exerciſe your power. The young fellows of the preſent age are tolerably forward, and charms like yours muſt inſpire them with uncommon ardour; if they are impertinent, therefore, you ſhould charge the fault to your own account; ſhould Leſſingham be among the

the number, I hope you will treat him with lenity, and conſider that the paſſions you inſpire, cannot be of the lukewarm, governable kind.

Har. My lord, I have no complaint to make of Lord Leſſingham; as an acquaintance I eſteem him.

Lord Bru. And as a huſband you will love him; is it not ſo?

Har. My lord, if ——

Mr. Ed. Come, come, niece, lay aſide all feminine affectation, it is too late to diſſemble; a few airs and niceties may be allowed at firſt, but when every thing is agreed and ſettled, a frank and expreſs conſent is the moſt generous.

Har. You know, Sir, I have ſome hours of conſideration yet allowed me, therefore

you will be pleaſed to excuſe my taking your advice at preſent. When we meet next I may be more frank and explicit, till then I take my leave. [*Exit.*

Lord Bru. A fine creature, upon my ſoul! but ſhe ſeems a little deficient in politeneſs, I think.

Mr. Ed. The effects of a country education, my lord; but ſhe is capable of improvement, a little commerce with the world will poliſh her.

Lord Bru. Are you ſure ſhe likes this marriage? in what manner does ſhe treat you, Leſſingham?

Lord Leſſ. With great coldneſs, my lord.

Mr. Ed. Meer affectation, believe me. Her mother has infected her with prudery. Lady Edmonds was always the greateſt

prude on earth. Sincerity never uſed to enter into the compoſition of a female; they were to be interpreted as dreams are, by contraries. Miſs Edmonds is in the old ſtile, and muſt be judged by the manners of the laſt century; for ſhe is as much a ſtranger to the courage and frankneſs of modern girls, as if the *anno domini* of her regiſter was to be found in the puritanical days of Cromwell. A little knowledge of the world will teach her, that minds are now of no ſex, and that women can ſpeak their thoughts as freely and as boldly as any of us.

Lord Leſſ. I do not think ſhe would be much improved by learning ſuch a leſſon. Surely a male and feminine mind ſhould be as different as their perſons, or even more ſo; for I proteſt I think a bold impudent woman is worſe than a bearded woman, as

as her mind is more important than her chin; and I ſhould not be half ſo much ſhocked to ſee a woman ſitting under the barber's hands to be ſhaved, as I have often been at ſeeing them aſſume the rakiſh impudence of a man.

Lord Bru. Pray, Leſſingham, how long have you been the advocate of modeſty? I think you were not always ſo preciſe in your notions.

Lord Leſſ. I ſhall not pretend to deny that I have had attachments to women who were not really modeſt; but if they had not worn the appearance of it, they could never have charmed me. They have been exactly the reverſe of thoſe Mr. Edmonds ſeems to approve, who I dare ſay are in fact modeſt, though they have laid aſide the air of it. Now, though I believe real modeſty may be very eſſential to the

permanent happineſs of a woman; yet in my general intercourſe with the world, I confeſs I require no more of the ſex, than that they ſhould preſerve the appearance of it. In a wife my expectations may be more extenſive; the ſubſtance and the ſhadow are there alike neceſſary.

Mr. Ed. I believe, after all, my lord, we are moſt of us of your ſon's opinion; but ſhould more eſpecially be ſo, if like him we were on the brink of wedlock, to which ſtate he ſeems to have happily adapted his notions; and that they may lie uſeleſs as little a time as poſſible, let me have the honour of introducing your lordſhip to my brother, that all things may be finally concluded.

Lord Bru. I attend you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE VI.

SCENE CHANGES TO LADY EDMONDS'S CHAMBER.

Lady EDMONDS, HARRIET, *and Mr. and Mrs.* HENBURY.

Lady EDMONDS.

THOUGH I am deprived by it of my laſt hope, I cannot but acknowledge that you acted right; it would have been unjuſt to have permitted Lord Leſſingham to ſuffer by your neceſſary diſobedience; to be happy, is not in our power, but to act juſtly is ſo; and conſcious integrity is the beſt ſupport under

misfortunes; therein I must place my hope, and from that may expect some alleviation of the sorrows that threaten to overwhelm me.

Har. Dear madam, you afflict yourself beyond reason; the worst evil that threatens me is poverty, the lot of the greater part of the world; shall I not be able to support what the weak, the ignorant, the young, the aged, and even the sick, bear every day with patience? What right have I to be exempt from the hardships of indigence? It is true, my birth gave me reason to expect to escape them, but it gave me no right; I could found my title only on the common course of things, and they are ever subservient to the supreme, unerring will.

Lady Ed. I allow poverty is no uncommon lot, and frequently it is no unhappy one,

ent, to thoſe who, born to it, are accuſtomed to its hardſhips; but they are with difficulty ſupported by perſons bred in eaſe and affluence: how ſeverely will you pay for the indulgences, the gratifications of your paſt life! Things really unneſſential to the true happineſs of man, are become through habit neceſſaries to you, and former plenty has increaſed your wants. Had you been born and bred in the thatched roof'd cottage, and taught from infancy to earn the bread you were to eat, you might poſſibly have been happier than a monarch on his throne; but the eaſe and affluence which we are ſo apt to conſider as a bleſſing, will now be your heavieſt misfortune.

Har. By no means. I ought rather to be thankful that I have enjoyed affluence in that ſeaſon of life, when the moſt eſſential benefit can be reaped from it. I

owe to it the advantages of education, more enlarged ideas, more refined principles, than I could have acquired in an abject ſtate; and if ſome evils may be more acutely felt from the more exquiſite ſenſibility of a mind accuſtomed to the delicacies of elegant life, they are overbalanced by the improvement of the moral character ariſing from them. The nicer our ſenſibility, the more ſtrongly we feel for others; our humanity becomes refined, our endeavours to ſerve them are proportionably active and vigorous; and our ſtrengthened reaſon ſuggeſts conſolations under our own misfortunes, and alleviates our ſufferings. I muſt have profited little by theſe advantages of early affluence, if I do not from thence either derive the means of warding off the ſeverities of poverty, or fortitude to bear them with compoſure and reſignation.

Mrs. Hen. I have often, my dear heterogeneous pupil, complained that your manners were not leſs maſculine; but I now rejoice to find your mind is not more effeminate. Your fortitude delights me, and does you honour. If fears and complainings were of any ſervice, Lady Edmonds and I muſt before this time have ſighed and waſhed you into a happier ſituation; we have furniſhed you with both wind and tide, (though you know I am not much addicted to crying) but to no purpoſe; therefore you judge rightly in leaving that part to us; while you nobly ſtruggle with adverſity, and will be a greater gainer in honour, than you are a loſer in eaſe. I am ſo well perſuaded, that, as Mr. Henbury ſays, the man who does not forſake himſelf, is never forſaken by Providence, that I proteſt the tears I have ſhed, have rather been for Lady Edmonds

than for you; I can deeply feel present distress, but I never anticipate future evils.

Mr. Hen. There is no end of anticipation; we not only render present to our minds the evils that futurity has in store, but all that it can possibly produce. Why then forestal misfortunes, none of which may, and certainly all of which will not, happen. In discouraging hope, we throw away the greatest blessing bestowed on man, that blessing which adds enjoyment to the present good, and administers consolation under the most oppressive misfortunes.

Lady. Ed. To me all hope is dead, I can expect nothing but affliction.

Mr. Hen. Instead of forming to yourself images of distress, I could wish your ladyship would employ your imagination

on

on the possible benefits that may arise from this cloud of adversity, which at present obscures the sunshine of our dear Harry's day. Adversity calls forth all the talents of a noble mind, distress forces to exertion. I can suppose, that thus thrown on his own strength, his faculties will be animated, his mind invigorated by an ardour he might never have felt, if he could still have supinely rested on the conveniences of hereditary wealth; and he be raised thereby to such a height of honourable distinction, as he would otherwise never have attained.

Lady Ed. These chimeras can be bred only in a mind more at ease than can be that of a tender mother in my situation. Can the bleeding heart receive consolation from such vague improbabilities? Greatness may sometimes take its rise from adversity, but, like other unnatural births, it

is

is a prodigy; and how can you more forcibly shew me the greatness of my misfortune, than by proposing to me the hopes of what is little less than a miracle for my consolation? I do not fear my son's being reduced to the extremest indigence, his sisters will preserve him from it, if I cannot; but to be deprived of the sight of him, is death to me.

Har. Fear not, madam, that a total separation between us can ever take place; while we are both on the same earth, it shall not be in the power of man to prevent my sometimes seeing you. As for what you are pleased to say of my sisters' assistance; though I love them tenderly, I will owe my support only to myself. Shall a man blessed with youth and health become the pensioner of another's charity! No — Had nature inflicted any imbecillity of mind or body upon me, I would with

grateful,

grateful, and therefore not painful humility, have accepted from the hand of another what my own could not beſtow. But nature has been more merciful; and as ſhe has liberally given me the means of obtaining a due ſhare of her general bounties, I will make good my claim; and have no doubt of ſucceeding, as far as natural wants require; though I may not attain to artificial indulgencies, often better wanted than enjoyed.

Mrs. Hen. Well, thou art a noble young fellow, that is certain; and I begin to forgive your averſion to petticoats, for I am now convinced they were not ſuited to ſo free, ſo fine a ſpirit. Yet I think I ſtill wiſh you had tried whether ſome advantage might not have been made of the earl's violent admiration. His heart is well known to be of combuſtible materials, and poſſibly you might have made him

wiſh

wish to supplant his son; for by your account he was well disposed to take fire, and it would have gained time.

Har. Very little; for if his heart is composed of such combustible matter as you imagine, it would quickly have burst into a blaze, and all my views would have been consumed in the conflagration. And I assure you it is no trifle that could persuade me to face his attack; I know no fire more formidable than that of his addresses. You are sensible I don't receive very kindly the gentle suit of a timid lover; but his lordship's ardour is intolerable. I cannot endure to see an old man act so out of character; a lover of threescore is a disgusting object.

Mrs. Hen. I grant it; and you have taken a revenge on him, which he would think a severe one, in supposing him three-

score,

ſcore, a term at preſent ſome years diſtant from him. I knew him formerly, and can judge of his age by my own, I remember he was a good deal my junior.

Har. Very poſſibly; and I might not have thus injured him, had he acted agreeably to his years, but the gaiety of his dreſs, the levity of his converſation, and the pains he takes to affect vivacity, and youthfulneſs of manner, makes him appear older, by the ſtrong contraſt between what he is, and what he would be thought. There is a proper vivacity for all ages, and perhaps none is more agreeable than that ſuited to the old, as it is accompanied with ſome dignity; whereas in youth it is apt to be blended with a degree of levity, which nothing but youth can excuſe.

Lady Ed. How can you waſte the time in talking of what is ſo foreign to our great concern, when we ought rather to be preparing

paring for the event we fear, that what little inconveniencies we can avoid may be provided againſt.

Mr. Hen. That certainly better deſerves our attention, but that we may not be interrupted, it will be adviſeable to retire into a more private chamber.

Lady Ed. I will attend you into yours, we ſhall there not be in much danger of intruders. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

SCENE CHANGES TO TUNBRIDGE WALKS.

Miss EMILIA, *Miss* CAROLINE, *Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

CAROLINE.

WHO was that gentleman that has juſt left you, Sir Richard.

Sir Rich. His name is Allerton; a wild extravagant young fellow, who is taking more pains to ſpend a fortune he has juſt inherited, than his father did to get it, though he was a moſt induſtrious trader; but he devoted only his attention and leiſure to gain, while his ſon ſacrifices his time,

time, his health, and I fear his conſcience, to the deſire of diſſipating wealth ſo laboriouſly acquired.

Em. Has he been long here? I never obſerved him before.

Sir Rich. No, he arrived but laſt night; and in leſs than half an hour after he came I ſaw him at the gaming-table; though I have heard, and ſomething he juſt now dropped convinces me there was much truth in it, that he lately loſt at one ſitting ten thouſand pounds, though he had a ſharer in ill luck.

Em. One would imagine ſuch a ſtroke ſhould have been ſufficient to damp, for a little time, the ſpirit of play.

Sir Rich. Of all ſpirits it is the moſt difficult to lay; I believe the only effectual means would be to ſerve it as the prieſts

in

in ſuperſtitious times uſed to profeſs doing by a perturbed wandering ſpirit, lay it in the Red Sea, or ſome other as effectual piece of water; only in this caſe the body it poſſeſſes muſt be laid along with it, for only death can cure it. The winning gameſter games on, becauſe, as he terms it, he will puſh his good luck; the loſer is inticed, by hopes of recovering his loſs. The one depends on the ſtability, the other on the inſtability, of fortune.

Car. Indeed we cannot wonder people continue a practice, for which they find inducements even from contradictory ſuppoſitions. But the loſs does not ſeem to ſit heavy on Mr. Allerton's ſpirits.

Sir Rich. Not at all; I believe thought is of all things that to which he is the greateſt ſtranger; and probably he will continue ſo till it becomes the moſt unwelcome gueſt he

he can receive; for people who will not ſolicit thought as a friend, are at length obliged to admit it as a tormentor. I find that one of the perſons who has made this late depradation on his purſe, is nearly related to a great friend of yours.

Em. I am ſorry any friend of mine has the misfortune to be related to ſuch a perſon; but who do you mean?

Sir Rich. Miſs Edmonds. Her uncle Mr. Edmonds, Jack Allerton tells me, was the head of the gang; for they deſerve no other name, who plundered him and another young fellow. One evening, after having invited them to a ſupper, they artfully inticed them to make ſuch free uſe of the bottle, that they were, if not abſolutely intoxicated; yet ſo heated with wine, as not to perceive the means they uſed to cheat them, which they are now pretty ſure, was by falſe dice.

Em.

Em. If they could prove that, I ſuppoſe the law would grant them ſome redreſs.

Sir Rich. Undoubtedly. And Allerton's companion in misfortune, very wiſely determining to expoſe his own folly, rather than ſuffer ſuch villains to eſcape puniſhment, or at leaſt diſgrace, has begun a proſecution againſt them; but Allerton, too wild to reliſh ſo ſober a ſcheme, I ſuſpect is come down hither with an intention of taking a more ſpeedy, though leſs warrantable, and far leſs certain revenge. This I gather from the queſtions he has been aſking me about Edmonds's preſent abode, and the cenſure he caſt on the proſecutor for preferring a legal, to a gentleman-like revenge, calling it meanneſs, and a mercenary preference of money to honour, with much of ſuch idle ſtuff.

Em. I never ſuſpected myſelf of a very blood-thirſty diſpoſition, but I feel that I ſhall be inclined to forgive Mr. Allerton much of his folly, if he ſhould by one fortunate thruſt deliver my friend from the perſecutions of that wretch.

Sir Rich. The friendſhip muſt be very ſtrong that can reconcile the gentle Emilia to the thought of duel and murder; can a heart capable of ſuch attachment feel only for a friend? can no return be afforded to a lover? I am almoſt jealous of Miſs Edmonds; ſhe engroſſes your whole affection.

Em. Not ſo, Sir Richard, my friends have ſtill their ſhare; but as for love, I have really none to beſtow; and he who ſolicits it, may excite my hatred, but has no chance to gain my affections. Why will you oblige me to repeat ſo often what gives

me

me no pleaſure to ſay; nor, I preſume, can give you any to hear; that if you would not chuſe I ſhould liſten to you with ſomething worſe than indifference, you will forbear this ſubject.

Sir Rich. I am ſenſible I have little merit to plead; but can a father's ſanction produce no effects in my favour?

Em. None; that a man, who has either true affection, delicacy, or generoſity, can wiſh. A father may claim a right to diſpoſe of my hand, but he cannot give my heart; that power I even have not myſelf; love will not come at our command; if it would, I aſſure you it ſhould before this time have been yours; I have endeavoured to love you; I long liſtened with patience to your addreſſes; I uſed every means to awaken ſome affection towards you in my heart; as my moſt fervent wiſh has ever been to render my inclinations conformable

conformable to my father's commands; but all my endeavours have been fruitless; or what is worse, served only to shew me the impossibility of my returning your love.

Sir Rich. Cruel Emilia! Some happier man, I fear, has obtained that heart, whose worth is above the wealth of kingdoms.

Em. Forbear such suppositions, Sir; no man ever yet made an impression on my heart; perhaps none ever will; however vanity may prompt you to believe, that only prepossession in favour of another can render me indifferent to you. Believe me, no such mighty barrier is necessary to preserve my heart against any attacks you can make upon it.

Sir Rich. Is it generous, madam, to return only contempt and scorn for the sincerest passion that ever man felt?

Em.

Em. If I feel any contempt, it is not produced by your love, Sir Richard, but by your obſtinate perſeverance in your addreſſes, after you are ſo well acquainted with my indifference. If the perſecutions you occaſion me do not excite my hatred, attribute it rather to the natural turn of my temper, little inclined to hate, than to my juſtice.

Sir Rich. Can you blame me for not relinquiſhing the hopes your father gives me of your hand?

Em. Certainly I can, when I give you no hopes of my heart.

Sir Rich. But as you ſay no one has yet obtained it, I have great reaſon to hope, that the aſſiduity and tenderneſs of the huſband, will not prove unavailing with a virtuous wife.

Em. The man who fanſies, that duty will produce love, I am apt to believe will find himſelf diſappointed; virtue may preſerve his wife from admitting a partiality for any other man, but will not make her ſee charms in him which do not exiſt; and indeed *he* has no title to a woman's affections, who marries her contrary to her inclinations.

Sir Rich. But, my dear madam, what can a man do who finds he is not fortunate enough to gain a lady's affections?

Em. If he has any delicacy, he will wiſh to obtain her eſteem, and that can be done only by deſerving it; which he certainly does not, if he prefers his own gratification to her happineſs.

Sir Rich. Oh! my dear Emilia, you talk like one whoſe heart has ever been chilled with cold indifference. If you

knew what it is to love, you would not think it so easy to forego all hopes of happiness.

Em. I do indeed know little of love; and am glad of it, if the consequences of that passion are want of generosity; let me add cruelty and injustice.

Sir Rich. How heavy a charge you bring against me, when all you have really to condemn me for, is loving you too well.

Em. If such are the effects of love, may I ever be the object of hatred; if you persist in your purpose, you may be certain you will be the object of mine.

Sir Rich. Pardon me, Emilia, if I cannot believe that a woman, whose heart is not prejudiced in favour of another, will long continue obdurate to a husband who adores her.

Em. Since nothing but experience will convince you, were I not to be the greater ſufferer, I ſhould not be ſorry you ſhould feel the melancholy conſequences of your obſtinacy.

Sir Rich. But, my dear madam ——

Em. Sir Richard, I will hear no more. I am tired of ever ſaying the ſame things, on the ſame odious ſubjects, and ſhould not have given you an opportunity of talking to me ſo long, had not my father ordered me to wait here for his return, but I imagine ſomething has prevented him; at leaſt he cannot wonder if we ſtay no longer. Come, Caroline, let us go home.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Enter Lord LESSINGHAM.

Lord LESSINGHAM.

I Hope I do not fright you away, ladies. Do not deprive me, madam, (to Caroline) of the pleaſure I ſo much longed for; let me, at leaſt, enjoy the happineſs of beholding you a few minutes.

Car. A few minutes, I believe, your lordſhip would think full ſufficient for that happineſs, but really we have not any to ſpare at preſent. Come, ſiſter, we have too long been the only women on the walks.

Lord Leſſ. Inhuman, Caroline! (catching hold of her petticoat) hear me but an inſtant!

Car. To what purpoſe, my lord? I am ſure you can have no buſineſs with me worth detaining me, when it is ſo very inconvenient; I abſolutely cannot ſtay, therefore, my lord, do not ſtop me.

Lord Leſſ. I know I do not deſerve you ſhould indulge me; I feel it ſenſibly; yet hear me, my lovely Caroline! hear me with the compaſſion to which, however blameable, my wretchedneſs may lay claim.

Car. This language, my lord, is an inſult I had no reaſon to expect; I hoped, at leaſt, to be reſpected ——

Lord Leſſ. My reſpect, my admiration, my love, are all yours; believe me, my ſweet girl, my heart never was one moment eſtranged from you.

Car. My lord, you amaze me — you diſtreſs me — pray let me go.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. Have you no pity for a man, who, ſubject to the ſtern authority of a father, who——

SCENE IX.

Enter Mr. MARTIN.

Mr. MARTIN.

I Have made you wait a long time, girls; I did not intend it, but I was detained. I am afraid you are tired; however, I am glad you have avoided Lord Leſſingham; I know the impertinence of young noblemen ſo well, that I was afraid he might have attempted to force himſelf into your company; though I was pretty ſure Ca-

roline—is not ſo mean-ſpirited, as to ſpeak to a man who has trifled with her, till he made her a ſubject of converſation for the whole place; yet, I think neither her birth nor fortune are ſuch as give him a right to treat her in that manner; notwithſtanding his fooliſh title.

Lord Leſſ. I am very ſorry, Sir ——

Em. [*Aſide to Lord Leſſingham.*] Peace, my lord, you will only make the matter worſe by any thing you can ſay Let it paſs, and do not force my father to acknowledge you are here.

Car. I aſſure you, Sir ——

Mr. Mar. You need not, child; I know if he had attempted it, you would not have ſuffered him to ſpeak to you. In not at firſt diſcouraging his unmeaning addreſſes, you are not more to blame than moſt other girls would have been; you all think it neceſſary

neceſſary to have a dangler at ſuch a place as this, and receive any one in that character too readily, for fear of appearing more neglected than your young companions; but the girl, who ſuffers herſelf to be twice trifled with, deſerves to be never ſeriouſly addreſſed; and yet I ſuppoſe you would think that a heavy puniſhment; however, I am ſure you will never deſerve it, by any meanneſs of that ſort. But I am glad he had not the inſolence to attempt to join you, it might have put you under ſome difficulty.

Em. It is late, Sir, ſhall we not go home?

Mr. Mar. With all my heart. You will dine with us, Sir Richard.

Sir Rich. I will do myſelf the honour of waiting on you, Sir.

[*Exit Mr. Martin, and Ladies.*

Lord Leſſ. Was ever any thing like that old fellow?

Sir Rich. That is always his method of expreſſing his diſpleaſure.

Lord Leſſ. I would have pulled any other man by the noſe for ſuch a method, however. But my Caroline's father may inſult me with impunity; and indeed I am conſcious I deſerve it. What can I do, Luton, to obtain the dear girl's pardon?

Sir Rich. Faith that is more than I can tell; and what is more, I know not what good it would do you, except you could alſo obtain her father's. Your ſituation would without it be more hopeleſs than mine; for they are ſuch dutiful girls, that the father's approbation is more important than the daughter's. I am perſuaded they will never marry without their father's conſent,

conſent, but I flatter myſelf one of them at leaſt will marry without her own.

Lord Leſſ. Thoſe are terms on which, I aſſure you, I would not marry. I adore my Caroline's perſon, but I would not accept it without her heart.

Sir Rich. Mighty delicate, this, my lord; but I, who am leſs refined, think the perſon of moſt conſequence, and it is what one can be moſt ſure of; the ſmalleſt ſprig of divinity can give us an indefeaſible title to it; but neither the whole bench of biſhops, nor the pope, conclave, and council, can ſecure us the poſſeſſion of a woman's heart; he who has it when he marries her, may not retain it a twelvemonth.

Lord Leſſ. That is poſſible, I confeſs; but I believe when it is ſo, it is oftener the fault of the man; it muſt be acknowledged we are very apt to grow tired of our

our wives, and we cannot wonder then if they follow our example; but at worſt it is ſomething to have a year good; in your ſcheme you are not likely to have even a happy day.

Sir Rich. I don't think ſo. Women are good creatures; they are mighty apt to love their huſbands: I make little doubt but the gentle Emilia will be of this number; and then your lordſhip muſt allow I ſhall have one advantage, I ſhall have the whole ſtock of her love, ſhe will have waſted none of it in ſighing, before prudery would ſuffer her to acknowledge it; whereas thoſe who love before marriage, puff away half of it, while the poor ſwain is pining with anxiety and fear, from his ignorance of the ſtate of his miſtreſs's heart. If you chuſe to diſcuſs this point farther, my lord, I will make the beſt of my argument while I am dreſſing, if you will honour me with your company at my lodgings;

ings; for, if I ſtay longer here, I ſhall make the old gentleman wait dinner, which will not ſweeten his temper.

Lord Leſſ. No; I have no great deſire to continue a diſpute which will ſcarcely bring conviction to either, therefore I will take my leave of you here. We ſhall meet in the evening, I ſuppoſe.

Sir Rich. No doubt. The twin ſtars will attract us to the ſame place. Your ſervant, my lord.

Lord Leſſ. Adieu. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Mr. EDMONDS. JAMES.

Mr. EDMONDS.

ARE you ſure it was Jack Allerton?

James. An pleaſe your honour, I know him perfectly well; I cannot be miſtaken in him, for he paſſed cloſe by me, but he does not know me.

Mr. Ed. Nay, I don't ſee why I ſhould doubt it, nothing is more probable than that an idle young fellow ſhould come to Tunbridge,

Tunbridge, at a ſeaſon of the year when there is ſo little to do any where elſe. But why do you ſuppoſe he has any deſign againſt me?

James. It is no ſuppoſition of mine, an it pleaſe your honour; his ſervant told in confidence to my landlady at the Bell, that his maſter was come down to fight a gentleman (though that I confeſs was not the appellation he gave your honour) who had cheated him of ten thouſand pounds, and my landlady in confidence told it me.

Mr. Ed. Well done, James; ſo you have got into the landlady's confidence already; you loſe no time; nothing like diligence.

James. I have learnt it of your honour.

Mr. Ed. Yes, I think you have improved in my ſervice.

James.

James. I muſt otherwiſe be a dull ſcholar, Sir, after the ſix and twenty years apprenticeſhip I have ſerved to your honour.

Mr. Ed. But this fool, Allerton! what can I do with him? I could excuſe the dog his threatenings, if he would make good his charge; but damn him I had but three thouſand pounds of his money; Dick Hazard, Tom Brag, Will Cogdie, Tim Cheatwell, Bob ſharp and Jack Loo, divided the reſt amongſt them; why muſt he begin with me?

James. I ſuppoſe he ſingles your honour out as the chief of the company.

Mr. Ed. That is an honour I don't deſire. I am a hero with a box and dice in my hand; but I always had a curſed averſion to iron-inſtruments.

James.

James. What does your honour intend to do?

Mr. Ed. Faith that is more than I can determine, but I know what I will not do; I will not fight, that is certain.

James. I fansy, Sir, he expects as much; for his man said, that if the gentleman would not fight, his master would post him up for a coward.

Mr. Ed. That must be avoided, if possible. It is damn'd hard, that if a man is not fool enough to throw away his life, he must be declared a coward.

James. Your honour knows the worst of it.

Mr. Ed. That is true; however, I never was posted up for one, but once, and the consequences were disagreeable enough; yet

yet not ſo bad as being run through the body, neither. I would, however, gladly eſcape both. I will pretend ſickneſs, to excuſe my going abroad, and if any letter or meſſage is brought to me, refuſe to take it; ſay, I am buſy, and you cannot give it me. I will bring this affair of my nieces to as quick a concluſion as I can, and then I will get away, and carry my booby brother with me; for by a letter I received juſt now, I am afraid our law affair will go damn'd ill; Allerton might have contented himſelf with that, if he had not been curſedly unreaſonable.

James. I never liked Mr. Brag's ſervant being let into the ſecret; if it had not been for him, they could never have known any thing about the dice; I am ſure your honour will do me the juſtice to ſay, that in all the twenty years I have loaded your dice, no body has ever been able to prove a tittle of the matter.

Mr.

Mr. Ed. No, no, thou art an honeſt fellow, James, and I will reward thee nobly.

James. I thank your honour, that may be when you pleaſe; but if you would be ſo good as to pay me a little of my wages now, it would be very ſeaſonable; a family is chargeable; it is ſo long ſince my wife or I had any wages of your honour, that ſhe has ſcarcely got cloaths to wear; and my poor daughter is very ſick and ill, we want to have a phyſician to her, only we have not wherewithal to fee him.

Mr. Ed. Pho — what can the doctor do? phyſic is all a cheat; they pretend to much, but they preſcribe by chance; and if they cure, it is by chance; yet, of all who live upon chance, they the leaſt know how to make the doctrine of chances turn to their advantage, or rather to that of their patients.

James.

James. Well, Sir, let that be as it may, when we are ſick, we are all glad to give them a chance of curing us; and I ſhould not be eaſy if I were not to give my daughter that chance; ſhe is my only child, and it would grieve me ſadly to loſe her; therefore, pray Sir, let me have a little money; I have lived too long upon hope.

Mr. Ed. Well, well, you ſhall have money enough ſoon, never fear. If, by getting my niece married, or by exaſperating her father ſo much againſt her if ſhe refuſes lord Leſſingham, that he turns her out of doors, I can but once remove her from his ſight, I ſhall be able to do any thing with him; I will carry him with me to London, and make him give me the better half of his eſtate, or raiſe me the value of it on mortgage; and then I ſhall be able to pay any fine that a conſcionable judge can award, if this proſecution ſhould

go

go againſt me; and I will pay you and your wife all that is due to you; though as for her, were the truth known, I ſuppoſe I am not much in her debt; houſekeepers generally take care to pay themſelves.

James. I ſhall be glad to have your honour thus ſet at your eaſe; yet I think it hard that you will not ſuffer Sir Jeffery to enjoy the comfort of having either ſon or daughter; you might allow him a girl, they would not interfere with the entail.

Mr. Ed. Huſh! James; don't let ſuch an expreſſion eſcape you. Though my brother's unintailed eſtate is large enough to be an object of deſire to me, yet I might perhaps have left him to be coaxed and fondled by a parcel of ſilly girls, if they did not prevent his giving me at preſent that ſhare of his fortune which I, as elder in underſtanding, though younger in birth,

have certainly a right to; but whenever I ask for a considerable sum, his answer is, "Oh! but my poor Harriet, what is she "to do? what will become of her if I "part with so much money? I cannot "give away her fortune." Thus am I fobbed off with a few paltry hundreds, when I want thousands. But if I once get him into my hands, that education which has never been of any service to him, shall be of much to me; for I will make good use of his capacity of writing his name. In this affair I shall want some of thy assistance; and thou shalt reap a share of the benefit.

James. You may depend upon me, Sir, you know I am always ready to serve your honour.

Mr. Ed. I thank thee, James. But prithee let thy present care be to keep off any challenge from Allerton; I will take care

not

not to give him an opportunity of ſpeaking to me. His deſign ſits heavy on my ſpirits; I never was in a more uneaſy ſituation.

James. I will do my beſt, Sir.

Mr. Ed. Well, I will go to Sir Jeffery; I had worked him up into a violent rage; but in my abſence he may cool again; I muſt keep him in proper temper to receive his daughter's anſwer, that all may correſpond with my wiſhes. —— But here he comes, retire. [*Exit James.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter Sir JEFFERY.

Sir JEFFERY.

WHY, brother, I thought you were loſt.

Mr. Ed. I had ſome orders to give my ſervant, Sir Jeffery; and my anxiety, leſt your daughter ſhould perſiſt in her diſobedience, and thereby afflict the father, whom ſhe ought to endeavour by every means to oblige and obey, made me forget how long I had been abſent from you.

Sir Jeff. You are very good, brother, very kind indeed. I know you conſider all my concerns as your own.

Mr.

Mr. Ed. [*Aside.*] I *hope to do ſo at leaſt* —Indeed, Sir Jeffery, I could wiſh for my own eaſe, that I felt leſs for you. I get none of that quiet I hoped to ſecure to myſelf by living a bachelor; for I feel all the anxieties of a parent for your children, joined to the tendereſt paternal love. I ſometimes think I will endeavour to eſtrange my heart from you and them, and go abroad, that I may no longer be expoſed to the pain of hearing any thing vexatious about them.

Sir Jeff. Oh! dear brother, do not mention ſuch a thing, you would break my heart. I don't know what I could do without ſuch a friend as you are, to aſſiſt me in my hard trials. There are ſo many bad deſigning people in the world, that one does not know how one might be impoſed on, if ſo be, that in caſe one had not ſuch a true friend as you, to watch

for one. My head-ſtrong children would in time get the better of me, ſure enough.

Mr. Ed. That thought it is that keeps me in England, and makes me ſtill give my beſt attention to your affairs. My nieces, I am ſorry to ſay, are ſo artful, that no one perſon could have ſagacity ſufficient to elude all their deſigns; but, by uniting our care, we aſſiſt each other, and together can diſcover views that might not be perceived by one alone.

Sir Jeff. Ay, brother, two heads are better than one, is a true ſaying, and to be ſure we help one another mightily, when we join our two ſagacities together, as you ſay. They muſt be cunning indeed that can out-wit us both. But I wonder how women can be ſo inſolent as to fanſy they can out-wit us; perhaps ſometimes, when they have ſilly, very ſilly, fellows to deal with, they may deceive them; but brother,

ther, I think we are no fools, ha, brother?

Mr. Ed. I hope not, Sir Jeffery; but certainly your daughters think we are, or they could not undertake to manage us; if Miſs Harriet were not of that opinion, ſhe would not ſuppoſe ſhe would be ſuffered to refuſe a young nobleman, to whom ſhe can poſſibly have no objection, but his being choſen by you.

Sir Jeff. An inſolent baggage! I ſhall teach her her duty, ſhe ſhall ſee what it is to diſobey her father; if a hundred lords were to offer, ſhe ſhould have none but Lord Leſſingham; I will be lord and maſter in my own family.

Mr. Ed. You are much in the right, brother; and if I were you, I would ſend for Miſs Harriet, and make her give her anſwer directly; the time you allowed her

for conſideration is elapſed, and prolonging it will only make her more perverſe; thought and conſideration ſerve but to render women more wrong-headed.

Sir Jeff. That is true. I will ſend for her. Thomas, [*calls*] Thomas, tell my daughter, Harriet, to come hither.

Mr. Ed. Now, Sir Jeffery, ſtick cloſe to your point; you muſt expect tears and entreaties in abundance; be upon your guard, that you may not be melted by them; for if ſhe ſees you relent, ever ſo little, it will encourage her in her oppoſition. Women owe their power more to their tears than to their beauty; they are the true feminine arms, with which they conquer men, whom the ſword could never ſubdue.

Sir Jeff. Never fear me, brother; let her cry, if ſhe will, I ſhall not mind it;

I give her no reaſon, I am ſure; many girls would cry for a lord, but ſhe muſt be an errant fool who cries, becauſe ſhe is to have one. I am aſhamed of having ſuch a fool for my daughter; but children do degenerate, they will not always take after their parents; why, would you think, brother, that Jockey and Tray, who you know, are both true ſpaniels of King Charles's breed, have got a black and white puppy, for all the world like a common cur: Tray pupp'd of it the very week before I came out of the country.

Mr. Ed. Ha, ha, ha! a notable inſtance. [*Aſide.*] I am afraid, brother, that Tray muſt have been guilty of ſome little inconſtancy, and preferred ſome ſcoundrel cur, to her proper mate, Jockey. But this inſtance will not account for the degeneracy of your children, as I dare ſay you don't ſuſpect my lady of playing you any ſuch trick.

Sir Jeff. No, no, brother, it is not ſuch men as me that women cuckold. There are ſome ſneaking fellows indeed who they ſerve ſo, and one does not much wonder at it; but where can the woman who has me mend herſelf? ha, brother?

Mr. Ed. Very true, Sir Jeffery; it might be difficult, as you obſerve; but women, when they are ſo diſpoſed, do not always require their paramours to be preferable to their huſbands, in any one circumſtance, but that of not being their huſbands, that ſingle merit will make up for every deficiency. Did you never read Dryden, brother? he had had two wives, and was thought to be pretty well acquainted with others of the ſex; and he tells us his opinion of women very plainly, when he ſays, "and the firſt devil ſhe ſaw, ſhe "changed her love." But here comes my niece; now ſhew her, that if ſhe is a

fool,

fool, you are not; that, on the contrary, you have wisdom enough to make her wise too.

Sir Jeff. That I will, I promise you, brother.

SCENE III.

Enter Lady EDMONDS *and* HARRIET.

Mr. EDMONDS. [*Aside to Sir Jeffery.*] OBSERVE, she has brought her bully-back with her.

Har. Did you send for me, Sir?

Sir Jeff. Yes, I did ſend for you, minx; but not for you, my lady; but you will always be thruſting yourſelf where you have no buſineſs.

Lady Ed. I did not imagine my preſence could be thought impertinent where my huſband and my child are; or that they could have any buſineſs where I muſt not conſequently have ſome concern.

Sir Jeff. You are always thinking and imagining, and never to the purpoſe; you have nothing to do here that I know of, it was only Harriet that I wanted.

Mr. Ed. You had better come to the point, Sir Jeffery, my lady, you ſee, chuſes to keep her ground, trifling diſputes only create unneceſſary delay.

Lady Ed. I do indeed, Sir, chuſe to keep my ground, except Sir Jeffery is deſirous of being alone with his daughter, then I ſhall willingly retire; but ſurely the wife and mother has as good right to be preſent, as the brother and uncle.

Mr. Ed. Nay, madam, I aſſure you I am not fond of my poſt, there is nothing I hate ſo much as domeſtic altercations; I have preſerved myſelf from them at home, by never taking a wife; therefore, you cannot ſuppoſe I am deſirous of being a witneſs of the quarrels in any other family. If Sir Jeffery will permit, I ſhall be glad to retire.

Sir Jeff. Oh! no, brother, dear brother, don't leave me.

Mr. Ed. (*If I had not been ſure of your anſwer, my ſweet brother, I ſhould not have*

made the offer.) [*Aside.*] I am at your command, Sir Jeffery, you are my elder brother, and I obey. But pray don't mind me. Say what you intended, I shall not meddle in your affairs. No one is so good a judge of what is prudent and proper as yourself. You had better at once tell my niece on what account you sent for her. (*He will trifle here all day without coming to the point.*) [*Aside.*

Sir Jeff. Why, Harriet, I sent for you to tell me in one word, whether you chuse to be turned out of doors, or to marry Lord Lessingham?

Har. Dreadful alternative! May I not hope from a father's indulgence ——

Sir Jeff. No, that you may not; I will have no dallying; my indulgence it is that makes me wish to see you a lady, it is indulging the vanity all you women have.

Har.

Har. Indeed, Sir, I have it not, why therefore muſt I be rendered unhappy becauſe ſome women are vain? I have not the leaſt deſire for a title.

Sir Jeff. That's nothing to me, I deſire to ſee my daughter have one, and that is ſufficient; I am your father, I have a right to command you, and I will be obeyed.

Har. In every thing elſe, Sir, obedience would be my greateſt pleaſure, but in this it is impoſſible.

Mr. Ed. Are you married already, madam?

Har. No, Sir, I am not.

Mr. Ed. Then I own I cannot conceive where the impoſſibility can be of your obeying your father.

Har.

Har. As it is not consistent with the desire of happiness naturally implanted in every human heart, for us to chuse what we know will render us unhappy; it is impossible for me to consent to a thing that will make me so.

Mr. Ed. Impossible to chuse, perhaps, but not impossible to consent. What must we think of that daughter's sense of duty, who will obey only when the command corresponds with her own inclination?

Sir Jeff. Very true; fine duty that indeed; so I suppose you would only have me command just what you bid me. A pretty sort of a father you would make of me truly; you would govern me then, would you? you are mightily mistaken, for I shall govern you, I assure you; and either consent to marry Lord Lessingham as soon as ever writings can be drawn, and

to receive directly Lord Bruton as your father-in-law, and his ſon as your intended huſband, or leave my houſe this inſtant, and never attempt to ſee my face again till you have learnt your duty.

Har. Dear Sir, on my knees, I ——

[*Kneels to him.*

Sir Jeff. What have I to do with your knees? if you are as diſobedient kneeling as ſtanding, I know of no uſe in your changing your poſture.

Lady Ed. Dear Sir Jeffery, let me beſeech you to have pity on you: daughter, on me, on yourſelf; for a moment's reflection will make you ſhudder at the thought of having turned out of doors a girl ſo young, ſo lovely as your Harriet.

Sir Jeff. It is ſhe turns herſelf out of doors, ſhe may ſtay if ſhe will, ſhe need but obey me, and I ſhall be ſatisfied.

Mr.

Mr. Ed. He begins to cool, this muſt not be. [*Aſide to Lady Edmonds.*] Indeed, my dear madam, I know not how to forgive your implied reflection on my niece; is it poſſible that you can think her virtue is not ſtrong enough to conquer any dangers to which her beauty may give riſe? The very cauſe of my brother's anger ſhews the young lady is not deficient in reſolution and ſteadineſs. I am ſure, as ſhe can refuſe to comply with her father's inclinations, ſhe will not ſubmit to thoſe of any other perſon; if ſhe can reſiſt even what is juſt, ſhe is certainly able to repel what is vicious.

Sir Jeff. Very true, brother, ſhe has ſpirit and obſtinacy enough to ſecure her, and ſhe muſt be very wicked indeed, if ſo be ſhe will follow bad courſes, rather than marry a very pretty young Lord; ſhe knows on what terms ſhe may be received

again

again by me; but if in caſe ſhe will not agree to them, ſhe ſhall not ſtay an hour longer in this houſe.

Lady Ed. Dear Sir Jeffery, grant her but one week's reſpite; allow her a little time for conſideration: on my knees [*Kneels.*] I implore you, in pity to a wife, who ſince ſhe was yours, has never before contended with your will, at leaſt, to delay this cruel reſolution.

Mr. Ed. [*Aſide to Sir Jeffery.*] Stick cloſe to your point, there is no other way of bringing them to reaſon.

Sir Jeff. [*Aſide to Mr. Edmonds.*] Never fear. [*Aloud.*] Hold your tongue, wife; all you get by oppoſing me is, that I charge you never to attempt to ſee her; if you do, you ſhall follow her, that's all. Do you think it ſuch a mighty merit that you have never before contended with my will? Is

not

not obedience your duty? What thanks then do I owe you? If in caſe you don't obey me ſtill, and forbear ever attempting to ſee that obſtinate wilful minx, I ſhall make no ceremony of ſhewing that I know how to exert the authority of a huſband, as well as that of a father. Get out of my houſe this inſtant, you ſacucy baggage, and ſee how you like your diſobedience.

[*Going.*

Lady Ed. and Har. Dear Sir, hear us but one moment!

[*Mr. Edmonds pulls him by the ſleeve.*

Sir Jeff. Not I, I will hear no more. Get you gone; I will ſee my houſe rid of all diſobedience. You know my mind now, and I ſhall not alter it. So march—march—do you hear.

[*Exit Sir Jeffery, and Mr. Edmonds.*

Lady

Lady Ed. Oh! my child, my dear child! what will become of you! and how can I live without you.

[*Sinks into a chair and weeps.*

Har. Dear madam, be comforted, your ſorrow touches me far more nearly than any diſtreſſes that may befal me.

Lady Ed. Muſt my afflictions never know a period? Condemned through life to the worſt of ſlavery, deſtined to be the ſlave of a tyrant weak in every thing but power, who has no other meaſure for his own importance, but the degree of ſuffering he inflicts on me! yet could I but blame him, it would move me to exert endeavours to obtain redreſs, but he, alas! is the object of my pity; and while I ſorrow for myſelf, I grieve for him, whoſe happineſs is impaired by all that deſtroys mine. The weakneſs of his underſtanding

renders

renders him the innocent cauſe of all my wretchedneſs, as it makes him liable to be impoſed upon by the worſt of men; whoſe conſtant endeavour it has ever been to make me miſerable. I ſoon found the cruelty of my lot; but when Providence gave me children, I hoped that in them I had a ſtore of bleſſings, of which his malice could not deprive me. But alas! they have proved the ſource of my greateſt calamities. How many tears has the untimely death of many of them coſt me! How many pangs have I ſuffered for thoſe who ſtill live! And now to have the darling of my heart torn from me, the beſt, the loveliest of children; endeared by being ſaved from impending deſtruction! to be deprived of my laſt, my only remaining joy and comfort, it is too much!

Her. My deareſt madam! you conquer all my fortitude, at the time when I moſt want it. You melt me to female ſoftneſs,

when

when manly courage can alone ſupport me. The proſpect of dangers and difficulties do not alarm me, but your grief ſtabs me to the heart. I beſeech you ſpare me this dreadful trial, and for *my* peace, endeavour to regain your *own*. Be not ſo affected by a tranſient ſtorm which muſt blow over, depend upon it my father will relent.

Lady Ed. Oh! never, never. His vile inſtigator will prevent all the ſoft emotions, the tender regrets, which might naturally ariſe in the breaſt of a parent; or if he cannot quite repreſs them, he will ſoon awe them into ſilence; for a man of Sir Jeffery's degree of underſtanding had rather be thought unnatural than weak. Mr. Edmonds has pretty nearly compleated all the harm he can do me; all that is left him, is to prolong the exiſtence of my injuries. This laſt is his maſter-piece in miſchief, and never will he again ſuffer me to enjoy the preſence of my child. His wick-

edneſs deprives me of hope, the only reſource of the wretched. [*Weeps.*

Har. Deſpair, my dear mother, is an unnatural inmate of ſuch a mind as yours. Reſignation to the will of a ſuperior power, and confidence in his goodneſs, have ever been your ſupport hitherto: Oh! loſe not now ſo neceſſary a conſolation.

Lady Ed. My child, you recal me to my duty. I will endeavour to ſubmit and to hope, but in the very moment of calamity I find myſelf too weak; at preſent all the mother prevails; the maternal heart muſt feel; but when the firſt ſhock is paſſed, poſſibly the Chriſtian may happily prevail over the mother.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. HENBURY.

Lady EDMONDS.

OH! my good friends, you are come to ſhare the affliction you cannot cure. My child is baniſhed from the parental roof.

Mrs. Hen. We know it but too well. Expectation had prepared us for it; yet although we had little hope of any happier event, we waited with anxious expectation for a certainty; when meeting Sir Jeffery and Mr. Edmonds in the garden, the former made us underſtand what had paſſed, by ordering me to ſee whether Miſs Harriet had left the houſe, and if not to haſten her

her departure, for he would not ſuffer her to remain an hour longer.

Lady Ed. How inſatiable is cruelty! Is there ſuch luxury in grief that they envy me the few ſad moments I might yet paſs with my child? I am forbidden to ſee her after ſhe leaves this houſe, and yet not allowed to behold her a little longer, though my eyes are of no value to me, but as they enable me to look on her, nor when ſhe is removed from them can have any employment but to weep.

Mrs. Hen. My dear lady, you only aggravate your ſorrow by delay. By detaining the object of their anger, you may exaſperate them, but can adminiſter no conſolation to yourſelf. Every moment you thus obtain, is as painful to you, as the inſtant of ſeparation. I have provided a convenient lodging; let me conduct our dear pupil to it; and reſt aſſured that much

time ſhall not paſs before you ſee her again. You may truſt to my vigilance, for deceiving their malice. The beſt of mothers and of children ſhall not be long deprived of the ſight of each other.

Lady Ed. I know the ardour and activity of your friendſhip, but who can tell what means may be contrived by that archfiend, our perſecutor, to fruſtrate all your kind endeavours? How can I part with my only joy, when my eyes may never again be ſo bleſſed! Would you leave me ſo ſoon my Harriet?

Har. Were I maſter of my fate, I would never leave ſo excellent, ſo amiable a mother, but as that may not be, I ſubmit the time to you; I have no wiſh, but to give you as little pain as poſſible. Yet I fear my preſence only aggravates your diſtreſs, and the ſight of your grief increaſes mine.

Mr. Hen. Be perſuaded, madam; by prolonging your farewel, you make it more afflictive. Permit me to lead you to your chamber.

Lady Ed. Muſt it then be ſo? One laſt farewel, one laſt embrace, and then — oh! then! I will ſubmit. [*Embraces Harriet.*] My life, my love, heaven preſerve and bleſs — oh! [*Faints.*

Har. Oh heavens! ſhe is breathleſs! Inhuman, deteſtable murderer! — ſhe is gone — ſhe is dead ——

Mrs. Hen. Peace, peace; this is only a temporary ſuſpenſion of her ſenſes, ſhe will ſoon recover them. Let us take advantage of the opportunity, and after conveying her to her bed, we will leave the houſe before ſhe revives, to avoid the repetition of ſo ſad a ſcene.

Har. Do what you will with me, I have no power either to act or judge. Her grief ſinks me into infancy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

SCENE CHANGES TO Mr. MARTIN'S HOUSE.

CAROLINE. *Lord* LESSINGHAM.

Lord LESSINGHAM.

GRANT me but a patient hearing, my dear madam.

Car. My lord, I cannot. I am surprized you ſhould wiſh to expoſe me to my father's anger, by attempting to viſit me; you had ſufficient proof this morning how ſuch a proceeding muſt offend him.

Lord Leſſ. I own it; but, my lovely Caroline, there is more terror in your frowns than in the anger of a thouſand fathers. Beſide, I left him engaged in company at the coffee-houſe, and not likely to return home of ſome time; and meeting your ſiſter, who told me ſhe was going to call on Miſs Edmonds, I could not reſiſt the deſire of ſpeaking to you alone; and can you blame me for taking an opportunity of ſuing for your pardon, which only can alleviate the anguiſh of my mind?

Car. My pardon is of ſo little conſequence, my lord, that it is not worth a contention,

contention, if I can obtain your abſence by it, I ſhall think the purchaſe cheap; on thoſe terms therefore it is at your ſervice.

Lord Leſſ. Thoſe are not the expreſſions of forgiveneſs, my Caroline; I confeſs my fault, I am ſenſible I deſerve all your reſentment; but are the commands of a rigid father no extenuation of my guilt?

Car. I don't accuſe you of any guilt, my lord, I never ſuppoſed that by the idle profeſſions of love you made to me, you had any intention of conveying to me the fee-ſimple of your heart; Miſs Edmond's ſuperior merits gave her a ſuperior right, which I very readily acknowledge; I only deſire to be no longer the object of your addreſſes.

Lord Leſſ. I do not diſpute Miſs Edmonds's charms, but could never find they had the power of obliterating my Caroline's for one inſtant from my mind. She may juſtly demand my admiration and eſteem, but my affections can be only yours. Obedience to my father neceſſarily directed my addreſſes, but never could influence my heart.

Car. Believe me, my lord, ſuch a declaration does you little honour, and is very unfit to regain you any ſhare of my eſteem; inconſtancy I might forgive, but treachery I never can pardon. To think myſelf injured by being forſaken, is a compliment I do not find myſelf at all inclined to pay you; but by your own account, you endeavoured to injure my friend, in the cruelleſt manner.

Lord Leſſ. That is a charge of which I confeſs I cannot acquit myſelf; and had I not been certain that my father by depriving me of my inheritance, would likewiſe have deprived me of you, I could not have determined to obey him. In ſo cruel a ſituation, I wiſhed at leaſt to preſerve ſomething out of the wreck of happineſs; and was reſolved that all the ſtudy of my life ſhould be to compenſate in every thing within my power, for the involuntary injury I ſhould do Miſs Edmonds, by not being able to give her my affections with my hand. I confeſs this would have been a very inadequate return, for the honour of being accepted as a huſband by ſo very amiable a woman; but however blameable, your cenſure would be ſoftened by compaſſion, if you knew what I have ſuffered in the conflict; and it is not to your

juſtice, but your pity, that I apply for pardon.

Car. I ſee little temptation to give it; for I might thereby expoſe myſelf to all the labours of a popiſh confeſſor, if every time that your father commands you to pay your addreſſes to a lady of his chuſing, I am to be applied to for abſolution. You are ſo very obedient a ſon, that the office really might be too laborious, and abſolutely uſeleſs to us both.

Lord Leſſ. No, my deareſt Caroline —

Car. Your expreſſions are very familiar, my lord.

Lord Leſſ. Oh! for heaven's ſake! excuſe them, the cold formality of common appellations ill ſuits the ſentiments of my heart. Let me therefore call you my deareſt,

eſt, my lovelieſt Caroline, whilſt I ſwear, that never again ſhall even the proſpect of certain ruin tempt me to aſſume the ſlighteſt appearance of infidelity; of the reality I never can be guilty. I have indeed nothing to offer that is worthy of your acceptance, without my father's conſent, for alas! I have nothing I can call my own, but my worthleſs ſelf; yet that ſelf ſhall ever be ſo devoted to you, that I will bear all the conſequences of his anger, rather than liſten to propoſals of any other woman, though ſhe were to bring with her the wealth of worlds. Tell me but that you forgive me, and even in poverty I cannot be wretched.

Car. Leave me, my lord, I beſeech you; you can expect nothing from me while you keep me in ſuch terrors; I hear a rap at the door — ſhould it be my father — I cannot ſtand the ſight of him.

Lord Leſſ. Say but you forgive me, my angel, and I will leave you, but I cannot go without your pardon.

Car. This is extorting it; under my preſent apprehenſions it will not be a free gift; however, do but go, and I forgive you any thing.

Lord Leſſ. May heaven's choiceſt bleſſings reward my beſt, my generous love, for thoſe enchanting ſounds! may ——

SCENE

SCENE VI.

Enter EMILIA.

EMILIA.

LORD Leſſingham! my lord, how could you venture hither?

Lord Leſſ. Be eaſy, madam, I go this inſtant. But ſurely friends are much ſooner ſatiated with each other's company than lovers; your viſit has been very ſhort.

Em. Oh! my lord, I have made no viſit. When I got to Sir Jeffery's door, I found the very footmen weeping: my Harriet is gone, baniſhed the houſe by her inhuman father; and Lady Edmonds

they told me was too ill for any perſon to be admitted to her. I could learn no particulars, for Mrs. Henbury is gone with my Harriet; and Mr. Henbury was buſied, with the menial part of the family, in attendance on the unhappy mother. You may ſuppoſe I did not attempt to ſee Sir Jeffery, who the ſervant ſaid was in the parlour, accompanied by his deteſtable brother, and your lordſhip's father; but I have no doubt this ill treatment is the conſequence of her refuſing to marry you.

Lord Leſſ. It will not admit of a doubt; ſhe could commit no other offence. She feared a no leſs fatal conſequence, and I would gladly have expoſed myſelf to ruin, to have preſerved her from it, but ſhe would not ſuffer me.

Exe.

Em. I am ſure ſhe would not. Her generous mind would prompt her to undergo any misfortune, rather than bring diſtreſs on another. But, my lord, you ſaid you were going away, indeed it is neceſſary you ſhould go; I would not for the world have my father find you here.

Lord Leſſ. He ſhall not; I leave you this inſtant. Think of me with compaſſion, my deareſt Caroline, I dare not ſay with tenderneſs, and my mind will find ſome reſt.

Car. Mine cannot, while your lordſhip is here, therefore I intreat you to depart without delay.

Lord Leſſ. Adieu then, loveliеſt of women. [*Exit.*

Em.

Em. What can be become of my Harriet!

Car. I wonder she did not fly to us for refuge; she must know we should use our best endeavours to console her.

Em. I suppose she was doubtful of my father's approbation, and to say truth, with some reason. Fathers are so apt to be prejudiced in favour of paternal authority, that I question whether she would have met with a very kind reception from him; though he has a just opinion of both Sir Jeffery and Mr. Edmonds.

Car. That thought did not occur to me, though it is but too true. Surely she will acquaint us with the place of her retreat.

Em. I have, no doubt of it; but I am under apprehensions lest she should have left this place; I am impatient to see her,

I long

I long to comfort her, though I cannot approve the cauſe of her preſent diſtreſs. I ſhould diſapprove it more, were I not prejudiced by my hopes, that it may turn to the advantage of my Caroline. By finding Lord Leſſingham here, I imagine he has once more made a tender of his heart.

Car. Indeed he has; and with ſuch apparent ſincerity, that I found it difficult to preſerve the appearance of indifference, or the reality of reſentment.

Em. You accepted his ſubmiſſions then?

Car. Not abſolutely, I believe; but I proteſt I ſcarcely know what I did. I was ſo diſtracted between love and fear, that I can give but a poor account of what paſſed; I only know that my heart ſoon forgave him; and that at laſt my lips pronounced ſomething like a pardon; but he

he owed it fully as much to my apprehenſions leſt my father ſhould find him here, as to my inclinations.

Em. Well, Whatever were the motive, I ſuppoſe he was tolerably ſatisfied in having obtained it; and, to ſay the truth, he wore a very different face when I entered the room, than when I met him as I was going to Sir. Jeffery's. I imagined by the alteration, that the conference had not turned out in his disfavour.

Cor. I fear, indeed, too much otherwiſe; but what could I do? would not the appearance of great reſentment have been highly flattering, by ſhewing of how much importance he was to me? Surely the reproaches with which our ſex ſometimes load inconſtant lovers, are the greateſt compliments they can pay them. And, to ſay the truth, I was more inclined to

cry

cry than to ſcold, as I was more grieved than enraged at his infidelity.

Em. That I believe. My gentle Caroline's heart was not formed to be the harbourer of tumultuous paſſions. I am of your opinion, that the woman who rages againſt a faithleſs lover raiſes his importance, ſinks her own, and becomes the object of his contempt, as well as of his indifference. A cold eaſineſs of behaviour is what a woman in ſuch a ſituation ſhould endeavour to aſſume, that ſhe may not, with her lover, loſe her dignity, which in truth is a far more eſſential thing. She may go with honour and ſatisfaction through life without the one, or if ſhe chuſes it ſhe may replace the faithleſs ſwain; but a woman who has laid aſide the dignity of her character, is a deſpicable being; and dignity once loſt, can never be regained.

Cor. Your doctrine is very just and true; but, my dear ſiſter, part of it is the theory of one who has never yet begun to practiſe; eaſineſs is the only thing that cannot be affected, all endeavours to obtain, ſerve more effectually to deſtroy it. A heart oppreſſed by its own tenderneſs may aſſume an air of indifference; anger can borrow the placid ſmiles of good humour; or good humour conceal itſelf under the borrowed ſemblance of reſentment; but eaſe of mind can alone produce eaſy manners; as I have been far from enjoying the one, I cannot flatter myſelf that I aſſumed the other. To aim at it therefore I thought would only make againſt me, but I endeavoured, with what ſucceſs I know not, to appear indifferent.

Em. I have a notion you are but a bungler at hypocriſy; however you had one circumſtance

cumſtance in your favour; I fanſy his lordſhip was not a very diſcerning critic, he was too warmly intereſted, and too much agitated to obſerve your conduct very nicely. But after all, I know not whether he can be juſtified in renewing his addreſſes. He went too far before, for a man who is under the abſolute power of a father; that he is ſo, is the only excuſe he can make for his ſeeming inconſtancy; ſhould he then renew his attack on a heart, which if he be generous he ſhould not wiſh to conquer, as he may be again obliged to deceive it?

Enter Servant, and gives a note to EMILIA.

Em. It is my Harriet's hand! let the ſervant wait.

Serv. He is gone, madam, he went away as ſoon as he had delivered it. [*Exit.*

Car.

Car. Where is she?

Em. She has taken a lodging at the White House. She says she is well, and desires to see us as soon as possible. We will go instantly ——

Car. Not quite, for here comes my father.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

Enter Mr. MARTIN, *and Sir* RICHARD LUTON.

Mr. MARTIN.

SO — there has been fine work, girls — women will be head-ſtrong — there is your intimate and friend, Miſs Edmonds, has done for herſelf — ſhe has got herſelf turned out of doors — ſhe would not marry the man her father had choſen for her; — ſhe has got ſome fooliſh coxcomb in her head, I ſuppoſe.

Em.

Em. No, Sir, I am perſuaded ſhe is free from any folly of that kind. She did not like Lord Leſſingham indeed — and Sir Jeffery is ſo haſty——

Mr. Mar. The man is a fool, but what of that? He is a wiſe man indeed, who never does a fooliſh thing, and he muſt be worſe than an ideot, who never does a wiſe one. In this Sir Jeffery has acted like a man of ſenſe, and on ſuch an occaſion I would have done juſt the ſame thing. If any child of mine were to refuſe to marry the man that I, in my prudence, care, and wiſdom, had choſen for her, I would turn her adrift, and ſhe ſhould ſeek her fortune, if ſhe would not take that I had provided for her. But, thank heaven! I am not in danger of any ſuch trials; my girls have no wills but mine; they will joyfully give their hands wherever I ſhall direct them.

Sir

Sir Rich. [*Aside to Emilia.*] May I believe Mr. Martin?

Em. Nothing but insult was wanting, Sir, to compleat your ungenerous conduct. [*Aside to Sir Richard.*

Mr. Mar. Ah ha! whispering! whispering! you lovers have always your secrets. Emilia cannot I suppose yet bring herself to say tender things but in a whisper; in a little time, Sir Richard, she will speak them more audibly.

Em. [*Aside.* Provoking!] —— Really, Sir, I have nothing so tender to say, but that I might proclaim it by the town-crier.

Mr. Mar. A prude to the last minute, Sir Richard. Don't you love prudery? ha, Sir Richard.

Sir Rich. Whatever Miſs Martin is, Sir, I muſt love; though I confeſs I have not hitherto been prejudiced in favour of prudes.

Mr. Mar. That is one of the follies of you youngſters. When I was young, all women were prudes. I could not get my wife to confeſs ſhe loved me, even as we went to church to be married; I would not have married a woman who was not a prude, I can tell you that.

Sir Rich. A man who ſhould now be of ſo ſingular a way of thinking would be in great danger of dying a bachelor.

Mr. Mar. That's true, that's true. Women are ſtrangely altered. Where could one then have found a girl, who, like Miſs Edmonds, would have ſhameleſly run away from her father?

Car.

Car. Dear Sir, do not caſt ſuch a reflexion on Miſs Edmonds; ſhe did not leave her father voluntarily; he cruelly turned her out of doors; and ſo far was ſhe from being ſeduced from her duty by any man, that all this was brought upon her by refuſing a huſband; you might better call her offence an exceſs of prudery, than cenſure it as indecent.

Mr. Mar. You think Lord Leſſingham ſo odious, I ſuppoſe, that an extraordinary ſtep receives ſome excuſe, by being done to avoid marrying him; but I proteſt I don't ſee that: I cannot think him ſo very diſagreeable as to juſtify her diſobedience in any degree; an abſolute juſtification is impoſſible, for a modeſt girl ought to ſee only with her father's eyes; whatever defects ſhe may fanſy in the man, if her father thinks him a fit huſband for her,

ſhe

ſhe may be ſure he is ſo; it is time enough for a woman to diſcover her huſband's merits after ſhe is married to him.

Em. (Fine doctrine!) [*Aſide.*] But ſuppoſe, Sir, ſhe ſhould never diſcover his merits at all?

Mr. Mer. She muſt then blame her want of diſcernment, and endeavour, by a double portion of attention and obedience, to make him amends for her culpable blindneſs.

Em. (A hard leſſon to learn.) [*Aſide.*] ——Did you hear, Sir, whether Sir Jeffery's anger begins to ſubſide?

Mr. Mer. Subſide! how ſhould it ſubſide, except ſhe returns to her duty? No, no, fool as he is, he cannot be ſo very ſilly as to forgive her on any other terms. But I wonder you ſhould think it worth while

to enquire about her. I am ſure my daughters are too dutiful to have any concern for ſo diſobedient a girl. I know you blame her as as much as I do.

Em. You do me but juſtice, Sir, in believing I blame her diſobedience; yet I have particular reaſon to pity her, as I am not ſure her refuſal of Lord Leſſingham was not in ſome meaſure owing to her regard for my ſiſter, which made her diſlike the man, who ſhe thought had behaved ill to Caroline.

Mr. Mar. A pretty fancy, indeed! No, child, take my word for it, that was a recommendation; there never yet was a girl who did not like a man the better for deſerting another woman for her. You all love to triumph over a rival; and never find any great charms in a man that you have not rendered inconſtant.

Ew. Pardon me, Sir, if I take the liberty of ſaying you do us injuſtice; if any woman thinks in the way you attribute to us all, ſhe muſt be at once the vaineſt, and the fillieſt, of her ſex; for a ſmall degree of common ſenſe and common obſervation would convince her, that the man whom ſhe has rendered inconſtant to another, ſome other will as eaſily make inconſtant to her; and ſhe has little reaſon to rejoice in gaining a victory over a rival, when ſhe could not do it without, at the ſame time, conquering thoſe principles in her lover, which alone could deſerve her eſteem.

Mr. Mar. Why, child, thou really would'ſt have made a pretty miſtreſs for a hero in romance. Thou may'ſt perhaps fanſy Sir Richard, and I ſhall believe thee, and admire thy fine-ſpun notions; but we know

know the ſex too well; don't we, Sir Richard?

Sir Rich. Though I allow Miſs Emilia's ſentiments are not common, yet, Sir, as ſhe declares them, I cannot doubt their being ſincere; and I admire them the more, as they are wholly diſintereſted; for ſhe muſt be ſenſible that no man can be inconſtant to a woman like her; and though ſhe might triumph over many, ſhe can never have a rival.

Em. I am ſorry, Sir, I cannot pay the ſame compliment to your ſincerity that you did to mine, but you have really taken it a note too high, my credulity cannot reach it.

Mr. Mar. Why, ay, I think he has taken it a little too high; but there is ſome civility in telling a lye to pleaſe you.

Em. The favour is too common, Sir, to excite much gratitude.

Car. [*Aſide to Sir Richard.*] You would better pleaſe your miſtreſs by contriving to get us abroad, than by a thouſand compliments; for we want to call on Miſs Edmonds, but neither of us dare mention it, for fear of a prohibition.

Sir Rich. [*Aſide to Caroline.*] Thank you for giving me an opportunity of obliging. Upon my word Mr. Martin is ſuch good company, that with him the time ſlips away ſtrangely, and one forgets that a fine evening is running to waſte. Will you not take a walk, ladies? It is almoſt a ſin not to enjoy this fine weather.

Car. My ſiſter and I were thinking of taking a walk when my father came in.

Mr.

Mr. Mar. It is rather late; however, I can truſt my girls under your care, Sir Richard; their ſafety is now almoſt as much your buſineſs as mine.

Sir Rich. The truſt you put in me, Sir, confers both pleaſure and honour, which few truſts do. Give me leave to conduct you, ladies. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

SCENE CHANGES.

Enter Lord BRUTON, *and Lord* LESSINGHAM.

Lord BRUTON.

'PON my honour, Leſſingham, this rebuff is mortifying; I proteſt I pity thee, to be diſappointed of ſuch a fine girl is a hard caſe, if pride had nothing to do in it. I cannot imagine how thou can'ſt put ſo good a face on the matter.

Lord Leſſ. My pride, my lord, is not much wounded; I was never puppy enough

to

to expect every woman to like me; and though I acknowledge Miſs Edmonds to be a very fine woman; yet I confeſs ſhe had made no impreſſion on my heart.

Lord Bru. I did not imagine that impreſſion ſo difficult to make, I thought your heart tolerably ſuſceptible; and faith I know no woman who, in my opinion, has a better right to it.

Lord Leſſ. Poſſibly, my lord, I might have thought ſo too, had not another woman fixed her image there. I will not pretend to conceal from your lordſhip, that a young lady, more touching, though perhaps not more beautiful, had won my affections before I ſaw Miſs Edmonds; and ſhe kept her ground ſo well, that although my obedience to your commands made me quit her, to pay my addreſſes to Miſs Edmonds; yet her charms could not ex-

clude the firſt poſſeſſor from her place in my heart.

Lord Bru. And pray who may this young lady be?

Lord Leſſ. Miſs Caroline Martin; the youngeſt daughter of a country gentleman of fortune, who is ſtill at this place. Her beauty, the ſweet gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, her modeſty, and good ſenſe, were to me irreſiſtible; her fortune, I fear, is ſomewhat inferior to Miſs Edmonds's; but if your lordſhip would kindly conſent to my marriage with her, I ſhould be indebted to you for the happineſs of that life I have derived from you; and would endeavour to ſupply, by prudence and œconomy, the deficiency in her fortune; which, tho' I have no doubt but it will be a genteel one, cannot, I am ſenſible, be equal to what your ſon might demand.

Lord

Lord Bru. Then I am ſenſible ſhe cannot do for my ſon. Let me tell you, you would make but a very ungenteel figure on her genteel fortune. I cannot pretend to provide you with the means of indulging your whims; a nobleman, with an incumbered eſtate, can ſpare but little from his own occaſions; therefore, Sir, your Miſs Martin, with all her numerous virtues and graces, can be no daughter of mine.

Lord Leſſ. If your lordſhip knew her, I am perſuaded you would think ſhe would do honour to your family.

Lord Bru. Oh! my family does not want honour; I warrant you it has honour enough, it ſtands in more need of being enriched. Take my word for it, a wife is but an incumbrance at beſt, but a poor one is the devil. If I were to humour

your preſent whim, you would be a miſerable dog a year hence. Love is but a ſhort-lived folly, if it does not lead a man into the curſed nooſe of matrimony.

Lord Leſſ. The matrimonial nooſe is now no gordian knot; we have learnt a way of untying it almoſt as eaſily as our garters, therefore I ſhould ſuppoſe it muſt have loſt much of its terrors in the eyes of thoſe who heretofore thought it moſt formidable: but I was never among that number; and no one who knows Miſs Caroline Martin can doubt the happineſs of being united to her; if your lordſhip would have the goodneſs to conſent to my being ſo, the firſt buſineſs of my life ſhould be to ſhew my gratitude.

Lord Bru. No, no, you would ſoon find yourſelf curſedly bit, I aſſure you, and I will not be acceſſory to a thing of which you

you would ſo ſoon repent. Beſide, I ſuſpect that the obedience you boaſt was a meer cheat, and that Miſs Edmonds's refuſal was owing to the coolneſs of your addreſſes, if not to the more diſcouraging acknowledgements of your paſſion for this girl; but that trick ſhall not ſucceed: you and your Miſs Martin may ſettle what other kind of connexion you pleaſe, I do not trouble my head about ſuch things; but, depend upon it, if you marry her, not one penny of fortune ſhall you ever have from me.

Lord Leſſ. And take my word for it, my lord, Miſs Martin is not a girl with whom a man can form any, but the matrimonial connexion.

Lord Bru. Well, I ſhall not diſpute the virtue of your Lucretia, it is your buſineſs, not mine; for faith I have no deſign

ſign upon her. But can you tell me what is become of Miſs Edmonds?

Lord Leſſ. I can, my lord. In paſſing by the White Houſe this evening I ſaw Mrs. Henbury at one of the windows, and on enquiry found ſhe and Miſs Edmonds had been there about an hour. I thought it incumbent on me, who had unintentionally been the cauſe of her baniſhment from her father's houſe, to enquire after her health, and offer any ſervices in my power; flattering myſelf that notwithſtanding ſhe was averſe to marrying me, I ſtood ſo fair in her opinion, that ſhe would not fear my making an improper uſe of any commands with which ſhe ſhould favour me.

Lord Bru. Leſſingham, you confirm my ſuſpicion of your having acted an underhand part in this affair; had not her refuſal been concerted between you, it is impoſſible

impoſſible you ſhould be ſo free from reſentment.

Lord Leſſ. Upon my honour, my lord, however repugnant to my inclinations, my obedience to your lordſhip's commands were ſo implicit, that I transferred my addreſſes from Miſs Martin to Miſs Edmonds, without giving either of them the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe my doing ſo was owing to any thing but inconſtancy. I really was aſſiduous in my courtſhip, though I will not pretend to ſay, that I wiſhed to be ſucceſsful. I met with ſo little encouragement, that I was ſenſible I had no chance of her hand, except ſhe were actuated by the ſame motive that I was; and this morning ſhe told me her determination, from which I in vain endeavoured to prevail with her to recede; therefore, I was not ſurprized at the anſwer ſhe gave Sir Jeffery, nor can I have any right to be offended that

that she does not chuse to marry me, for which I am conscious she may have many good reasons. Could I but hope, my dear Sir, that you would reward my ready obedience by consenting ——

Lord Bru. No more of that, Lessingham, I am not fool enough to think your obedience very meritorious; if nothing but my blessing depended on my consent, I am apt to believe you would be less obedient. But how did you find Miss Edmonds?

Lord Less. Less distressed than I expected. She bears her father's cruelty with patience and fortitude, as far as it concerns herself; but seems greatly affected on her mother's account, whose spirits are less able to support this treatment of her beloved daughter.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. Though I cannot blame Sir Jeffery for his juſt ſeverity, yet I ſhall wait on the young lady, to expreſs my concern for having borne any part in the cauſe of her misfortune; ſuch beauty as hers makes one prodigiouſly compaſſionate. I have hitherto been little addicted to that idle impertinence of grieving for other people's ſufferings, but her's touch me very nearly. Of all the girls I ever ſaw, ſhe moſt ſuits my taſte. I am tired of the whining and the tender, they are all alike; but Miſs Edmonds commands one's admiration and ſubjection, with ſuch dignity and ſpirit, that ſhe ſubdues at once. I know ſome men like beſt the women who ſteal the heart, but to me that is meer filching, petit-larceny work; give me the girl who robs me of it *vi et armis*.

Lord

Lord Leſſ. If your lordſhip would have the goodneſs to undertake her cauſe, I ſhould imagine the influence friendſhip muſt give you over Mr. Edmonds, who governs Sir Jeffery, would enable you to bring about a reconciliation.

Lord Bru. By no means. Edmonds is not a man to be influenced by friendſhip; and I am apt to believe is curſedly out of humour at preſent, by which, perhaps, his niece ſuffers; for I hear a proſecution is begun againſt him and others, which, ſhould the charge be proved, would render England no agreeable abode to him. He is ſo down in the mouth, that I could not perſuade him to come abroad this evening.

Lord Leſſ. Want of ſpirit, rather than want of ſpirits, might be the occaſion of that, my lord; for Jack Allerton is come down

down brim-full of fire and fury, determined either to fight or cane him; which, I fancy, will confine Mr. Edmonds pretty closely to the house.

Lord Bru. Why, yes, I do not know but it may; he is a man of peace; he does not love blood-shed. I remember him formerly a great blusterer, but unfortunately he one day, like poor Bobbadil, was fascinated, planet-struck, and got well caned; since which time his manners have corresponded better with his mind.

Lord Leff. May I, my lord, take the liberty of saying, that I wonder how so despicable a fellow got admitted into the company of men of fashion; for though vice is no impediment, meanness and cowardice generally are so.

Lord

Lord Bru. Oh! he is the moſt uſeful fellow in the world. There is no kind of ſervice he will not do his friends. This very afternoon he gave me a friendly hint; for on my expreſſing my admiration of his niece, he gave me to underſtand, that if I managed the matter cleverly, I might turn her preſent diſtreſs to my advantage; but that I muſt take this with me, ſhe has too much ſenſe to be deceived, and too much pride for voluntary ſeduction.

Lord Leſſ. The villain! deteſtable raſcal! how could he venture to affront your lordſhip by ſuch an intimation! Did you not chaſtiſe his inſolence?

Lord Bru. No, faith; it was well meant, you know; it was kind to me, though but a raſcally trick upon her. However, I have no intention of making uſe of this

piece

piece of his friendſhip; I do't love unfair dealing in theſe matters; nor was I ever fond of enterprize. A kind-hearted girl never found me ſqueamiſh, but I ſhould not chuſe to entrap any woman. I cannot ſay but I could very well like a more laſting connexion with Miſs Edmonds; were there much chance, that ſhe who refuſed the ſon, would accept the father; her charms and her fortune together would ſufficiently ſweeten the matrimonial cup. But it is too late to go to her to-night; I will ſend an inquiry after her health, and wait on her to-morrow morning. [*Exit.*

Lord Leſſ. Surely ſuch a father as mine is a better lecture againſt rakery than ever was delivered from the pulpit. If his example corrupted my manners in my earlieſt youth, it has made ſome amends, by reforming them, ſince I arrived at an age when the underſtanding becomes able to contend with

with appetite. No man could continue vicious who had a living inſtance daily before his eyes, how contemptible vice renders an old man. Strange, that any one ſhould chuſe to give up the two beſt things man can enjoy on earth, his own approbation, and the eſteem of others! — eſpecially, that for ſo poor a conſideration as age will allow him, he ſhould forfeit the reſpect, the veneration due to his years, if his conduct correſponded properly with them. Yet ought I not to be more mild in my cenſure, ſince I fear I owe my juſter ſenſe of theſe things rather to my Caroline, than to reflection? but if love began the work, reaſon has helped to perfect it; and mercenary as my father is, I have this conſolation, virtue will be rewarded, even though love ſhould be denied indulgence. Yet to that denial I cannot eaſily ſubmit; I muſt try other means of prevailing with

my

my father. Yet I know of none that promiſe me ſucceſs,——I will ſee my Caroline again to-morrow; the ſight of her may awaken my invention, and inſpire me with ſome ſucceſsful thought. [*Exit.*

THE END OF VOL. I.